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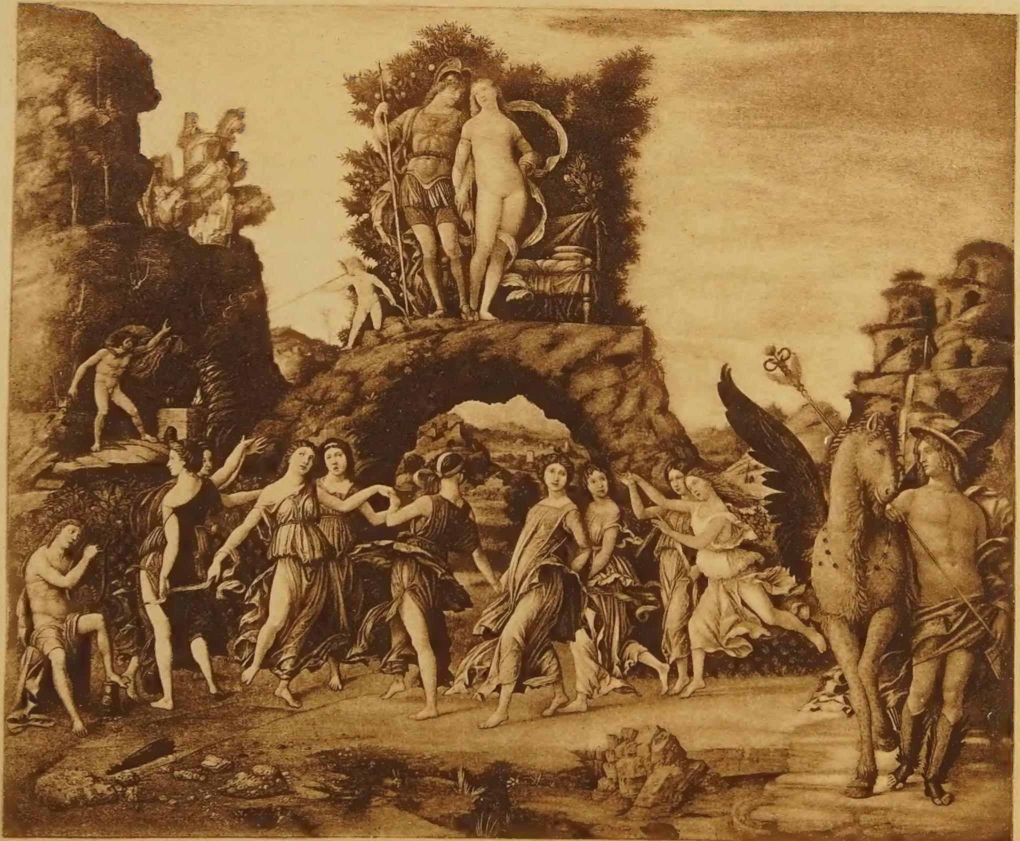

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THE GREEK CLASSICS

VOLUME TWO

Epic Literature

PART II

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INTRODUCTION

CLASSIC LITERATURE THE DOOR TO THE HOUSE OF ANCIENT LIFE

BY JOHN HENRY WRIGHT, LL.D.

Professor of Greek and Dean of the Graduate School of Harvard University

CLASSICAL antiquity, the civilization of the ancient Greeks and Romans, has left a record of itself in many ways. The record was made by persons, living, breathing human beings, with a wide outlook; hence it has a universal and a perpetual appeal to humanity. The ancients recorded themselves, their lives, works, ideas, and ideals, either collectively (or in smaller collective groups), or individuals among them made the record. The collective record is found primarily in all the institutions of the social organism (religious, political, and the like), and in that great social institution, as Whitney used to call it, language—language as form and expression. The record of the smaller collective groups or of individuals was made in the various forms of individual or mainly individual expression, chiefly in art, and in literature which is language as artistic form and content.

The ancient record is in large part lost, in large part blurred and become difficult of decipherment. But much has been preserved, either actually and immediately, or mediately and indirectly in the tokens of influences on other civilizations; and by the use of methods and instruments of ever-increasing precision in philological research the difficulties of decipherment are nearly met. Thus by the aid of hints that we have we can discover anew in some measure what we have not. For, as Terence says, "there is nothing so difficult that it may not be found out by searching."

Of the various kinds of record, that of literature, whether extant or reconstructed, is much the most important. This is because literature is itself the very essence and exponent of whatever was most characteristic and significant in the civilization of the ancients; because it is the clearest and most intelligible of the records; because it is the amplest. Indeed, without it all the other forms of record are practically non-existent, or, if existent, are unintelligible. All philosophy, nearly all history, nearly all the light on religion and social institutions, are but the content of literature. The monuments of art, though they speak a language all their own, gain new and fuller meaning from the testimonies in literature concerning the art and artists of antiquity. Language itself exists in amplitude and variety only in literature; indeed, in the case of the Greeks at least, there is little of the language extant that is not literary, *i.e.,* marked by conscious art, even the rude memorials engraved on stone or bronze being thrown into literary form. And the full character and meaning of language, its range and power, are not revealed except in the highly developed forms of literature. If all other kinds of record were lost or made inaccessible we could still read in literature alone nearly the whole story of antiquity, in all its beauty and strength, though this might lack, to be sure, some elements of vividness and concrete reality that the monuments of art in particular yield us. Yes, as Bacon says, "the images of men's wits and knowledges remain in books, exempted from the wrong of time, and capable of perpetual renovation."

Extant literature, as has already been intimated, is the foundation and chief substance of our studies. But extant literature is for several reasons defective. In the first place, from it are absent many important constituents of the whole, the vision of which is the ideal of our efforts. Not only are the works of many great writers of antiquity lost, and known to us only at second- or third-hand in quotations or in scattered and obscure allusions, but even whole classes of literature have no adequate representatives in what has survived. Herein how different the problem of the student of a modern literature from that of the student of classical literature: the former is bewildered by the wealth of his materials, from which he must choose in order to draw his pictures; the latter is embarrassed by his poverty: at critical points he often can make only a sketch, and that, too, a conjectural one, whereas the other gives us a picture rich in detail. Then, too, in its transmission to our day, ancient literature has suffered many mischances. The text in passing through the hands of scribes either unintelligent or too intelligent has often become something other than it originally was: it has been padded with inept glosses; its meaning has been misapprehended, and the false explanations that from generation to generation have gathered about and over the text have beclouded the eye of the reader so that he has not read the clear truth. He must, as George Herbert says, "Copie fair what time hath blur'd."

And yet even these unfavorable conditions have had their good effect. The fragmentariness and the perversion of the literary record have ever stirred the scholar to earnest endeavor. They have evoked the spirit of criticism, and have developed in the guild of classical philologians methods of accurate research, methods that in time have become models for all forms of historical inquiry as well as of philological inquiry in other fields. Again: These conditions have lent singular preciousness to every smallest item in the tradition. Each little thing,—each sound, each word, each phrase, each idiom, each thought, each turn,—each littlest thing has become important because of its possible significance in the reconstruction of the whole, that great edifice, the House of Ancient Life. We love and study the little because it is a member of the whole. Perhaps at times the idea of the whole has been lost sight of, in the student's concentration on the fragmentary and intrinsically petty. Of the scholar that goes astray for such small things, let us say what Hugutio said in the Twelfth Century of a Latin verse, the writer of which had sinned in the quantity he gave *sincerus*, "Let it and its writer be erased from the Book of Life, and be not enrolled among the Righteous *(Abradatur cum suo auctore de libro vitæ et cum justis non scribatur)*."

THE

ODYSSEY OF HOMER

DONE INTO ENGLISH PROSE

BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY THE

REV. W. LUCAS COLLINS, M.A.

AS ONE THAT FOR A WEARY SPACE HAS LAIN
LULLED BY THE SONG OF CIRCE AND HER WINE
IN GARDENS NEAR THE PALE OF PROSERPINE,
WHERE THAT ÆÆAN ISLE FORGETS THE MAIN,
AND ONLY THE LOW LUTES OF LOVE COMPLAIN,
AND ONLY SHADOWS OF WAN LOVERS PINE,
AS SUCH AN ONE WERE GLAD TO KNOW THE BRINE
SALT ON HIS LIPS, AND THE LARGE AIR AGAIN,
SO GLADLY, FROM THE SONGS OF MODERN SPEECH
MEN TURN, AND SEE THE STARS, AND FEEL THE FREE
SHRILL WIND BEYOND THE CLOSE OF HEAVY FLOWERS
AND THROUGH THE MUSIC OF THE LANGUID HOURS,
THEY HEAR LIKE OCEAN ON A WESTERN BEACH
THE SURGE AND THUNDER OF THE ODYSSEY.
—ANDREW LANG.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ODYSSEY

BY THE REV. W. LUCAS COLLINS, M.A.

THE poem of the Odyssey is treated in these pages as the work of a single author, and that author the same as the composer of the Iliad. It would be manifestly out of place, in a volume which does not profess to be written for critical scholars, to discuss a question on which they are so far from being agreed. But it may be satisfactory to assure the reader who has neither leisure nor inclination to enter into the controversy, that in accepting, as we do, the Odyssey as from the same "Homer" to whom we owe the Tale of Troy, he may fortify himself by the authority of many accomplished scholars who have carefully examined the question. Though none of the incidents related in the Iliad are distinctly referred to in the Odyssey—a point strongly urged by those who would assign the poems to different authors—and therefore the one cannot fairly be regarded as a sequel to the other, yet there is no important discrepancy, either in the facts previously assumed, or in the treatment of such characters as appear upon the scene in both.

The character of the two poems is, indeed, essentially different. The Iliad is a tale of the camp and the battle-field: the Odyssey combines the romance of travel with that of domestic life. The key-note of the Iliad is glory: that of the Odyssey is rest. This was amongst the reasons which led one of the earliest of Homer's critics to the conclusion that the Odyssey was the work of his old age. In both poems the interest lies in the situations and the descriptions, rather than in what we moderns call the "plot." This latter is not a main consideration with the poet, and he has no hesitation in disclosing his catastrophe beforehand. The interest, so far as this point is concerned, is also weakened for the modern reader by the intervention throughout of supernatural agents, who, at the most critical turns of the story, throw their irresistible weight into the scale. Yet, in spite of this, the interest of the Odyssey is intensely human. Greek mythology and Oriental romance are large ingredients in the poem, but its men and women are drawn by a master's hand from the actual life; and, since in the two thousand years between our own and Homer's day nothing has changed so little as human nature, therefore very much of it is still a story of to-day.

The poem before us is the tale of the wanderings and adventures of Odysseus—or Ulysses, as the softer tongue of the Latins preferred to call him—on his way home from the siege of Troy to his island-kingdom of Ithaca. The name Odysseus has been variously interpreted. Homer himself, who should be the best authority, tells us that it was given to him by his grandfather Autolycus to signify "the child of hate." Others have interpreted it to mean "suffering;" and some ingenious scholars see in it only the ancient form of a familiar sobriquet by which the hero was known, "the little one," or "the dwarf,"—a conjecture which derives some support from the fact that the Tyrrhenians knew him under that designation. It may be remembered that in the Iliad he is described as bearing no comparison in stature with the stalwart forms of Agamemnon and Menelaus; and it is implied in the description that there was some want of proportion in his figure, since he appeared nobler than Menelaus when both sat down. But in the Odyssey itself there appears no reference to any natural defect of any kind. His character in this poem corresponds perfectly with that which is disclosed in the Iliad. There, he is the leading spirit of the Greeks when in council. Scarcely second to Achilles or Diomed in personal prowess, his advice and opinion are listened to with as much respect as those of the veteran Nestor. In the Iliad, too, he is, as he is called in the present poem, "the man of many devices." His accomplishments cover a larger field than those of any other hero. Achilles only can beat him in speed of foot; he is as good an archer as Ajax Oileus or Teucer; he throws Ajax the Great in the wrestling-match, in spite of his superior strength, by a happy use of science, and divides with him the prize of victory. To him, as the worthiest successor of Achilles—on the testimony of the Trojan prisoners, who declared that he had wrought them most harm of any—the armour of that great hero was awarded at his death. He is not tragic enough to fill the first place in the Iliad, but we are quite prepared to find him the hero of a story of travel and adventure like the Odyssey, in which the grand figure of Achilles would be entirely out of place.

The Odyssey has been pronounced, by a high classical authority, to be emphatically a lady's book. "The Iliad," says the great Bentley, "Homer made for men, and the Odyssey for the other sex." This opinion somewhat contradicts the criticism of an older and greater master—Aristotle—who defines the Odyssey as being "ethic and complex," while the Iliad is "pathetic and simple." Yet it was perhaps some such notion of the fitness of things which made Fénélon's adaptation of Homer's story, 'The Adventures of Telemachus in search of Ulysses,' so popular a French text-book in ladies' schools a century ago. It is certain, also, that the allusions in our modern literature, and the subjects of modern pictures, are drawn from the Odyssey even more frequently than from the Iliad, although the former has never been so generally read in our schools and colleges. Circe and the Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis, have pointed more morals than any incidents in the Siege of Troy. Turner's pictures of Nausicaa and her Maidens, the Gardens of Alcinous, the Cyclops addressed by Ulysses, the Song of the Sirens—all amongst our national heirlooms of art—assume a fair acquaintance with the later Homeric fable on the part of the public for whom they were painted. The secret of this greater popularity may lie in the fact, that while the adventures in the Odyssey have more of the romantic and the imaginative, the heroes are less heroic—have more of the common human type about them—than those of the Iliad. The colossal figure of Achilles in his wrath does not affect us so nearly as the wandering voyager with his strange adventures, his hairbreadth escapes, and his not over-scrupulous devices.

To our English sympathies the Odyssey appeals strongly for another reason—it is a tale of voyage and discovery. "It is," as Dean Alford says, "of all poems a poem of the sea." In the Iliad the poet never missed an opportunity of letting us know that—whoever he was and wherever he was born—he knew the sea well, and had a seaman's tastes. But there his tale confined him chiefly to the plain before Troy, and such opportunities presented themselves but rarely. In the Odyssey we roam from sea to sea throughout the narrative, and the restless hero seems never so much at home as when he is on shipboard. It is not without reason that the most ancient works of art which bear the figure of Ulysses represent him not as a warrior but as a sailor.

The Tale of Troy, as has been already said, embraces in its whole range three decades of years. It is with the last ten that the Odyssey has to do; and as in the Iliad, though the siege itself had consumed ten years, it is with the last year only that the poet deals; so in this second great poem also, the main action occupies no more than the last six weeks of the third and concluding decade.

Between the Iliad and the Odyssey there is an interval of events, not related in either poem, but which a Greek audience of the poet's own day would readily supply for themselves out of a store of current legend quite familiar to their minds, and embodied in more than one ancient poem now lost to us. Troy, after the long siege, had fallen at last; but not to Achilles. For him the dying prophecy of Hector had been soon fulfilled, and an arrow from the bow of Paris had stretched him in death, like his noble enemy, "before the Scæan gates." It was his son Neoptolemus, "the red-haired," to whom the oracles pointed as the destined captor of the city. Ulysses went back to Greece to fetch him, and even handed over to the young hero, on his arrival, the armour of his father—his own much-valued prize. In that armour Neoptolemus led the Greeks to the storm and sack of the city by night, while the Trojans were either asleep or holding deep carousal.

It has been conjectured by some that, under the name of Ulysses, the poet has but described, with more or less of that license to which he had a double claim as poet and as traveller, his own wanderings and adventures by land and sea. It has been argued, in a treatise of some ingenuity,[1] that the poet, whoever he was, was himself a native of the island in which he places the home of his hero. There is certainly one passage which reads very much like the circumstantial and loving description which a poet would give of his sea-girt birthplace, with every nook of which he would have been familiar from his childhood. It occurs in the scene where Ulysses is at last landed on the coast of Ithaca, which he is slow to recognise until his divine guide points out to him the different localities within sight:—

---

[1] Ulysses Homer; or, a Discovery of the True Author of the Iliad and Odyssey. By Constantine Koliades.

> This is the port of sea-king Phorcys old,
> And this the olive at the haven's brow.
> Yonder the deep dark lovely cave behold,
> Shrine of the Naïad-nymphs! These shades enfold
> The stone-roofed bower, wherein thou oft hast stood,
> While to the Nymphs thy frequent vows uprolled,
> Steam of choice hecatombs and offerings good.
> Neritus hill stands there, high-crowned with waving wood.[1]

As conjecture only all such theories must remain; but it may at least be safely believed that the author had himself visited some of the strange lands which he describes, with whatever amount of fabulous ornament he may have enriched his tale, and it has a certain interest for the reader to entertain the possibility of a personal narrative thus underlying the romance.

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[1] Book xiii. Worsley's translation.

THE ODYSSEY

BOOK I

In a Council of the Gods, Poseidon absent, Pallas procureth an order for the restitution of Odysseus; and appearing to his son Telemachus, in human shape, adviseth him to complain of the Wooers before the Council of the people, and then go to Pylos and Sparta to inquire about his father.

Tell me, Muse, of that man, so ready at need, who wandered far and wide, after he had sacked the sacred citadel of Troy, and many were the men whose towns he saw and whose mind he learnt, yea, and many the woes he suffered in his heart upon the deep, striving to win his own life and the return of his company. Nay, but even so he saved not his company, though he desired it sore. For through the blindness of their own hearts they perished, fools, who devoured the oxen of Helios Hyperion: but the god took from them their day of returning. Of these things, goddess, daughter of Zeus, whencesoever thou hast heard thereof, declare thou even unto us.

Now all the rest, as many as fled from sheer destruction, were at home, and had escaped both war and sea, but Odysseus only, craving for his wife and for his homeward path, the lady nymph Calypso held, that fair goddess, in her hollow caves, longing to have him for her lord. But when now the year had come in the courses of the seasons, wherein the gods had ordained that he should return home to Ithaca, not even there was he quit of labours, not even among his own; but all the gods had pity on him save Poseidon, who raged continually against godlike Odysseus, till he came to his own country. Howbeit Poseidon had now departed for the distant Ethiopians, the Ethiopians that are sundered in twain, the uttermost of men, abiding some where Hyperion sinks and some where he rises. There he looked to receive his hecatomb of bulls and rams, there he made merry sitting at the feast, but the other gods were

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gathered in the halls of Olympian Zeus. Then among them the father of gods and men began to speak, for he bethought him in his heart of noble Aegisthus, whom the son of Agamemnon, far-famed Orestes, slew. Thinking upon him he spake out among the Immortals:

'Lo you now, how vainly mortal men do blame the gods! For of us they say comes evil, whereas they even of themselves, through the blindness of their own hearts, have sorrows beyond that which is ordained. Even as of late Aegisthus, beyond that which was ordained took to him the wedded wife of the son of Atreus and killed her lord on his return, and that with sheer doom before his eyes, since we had warned him by the embassy of Hermes the keen-sighted, the slayer of Argos, that he should neither kill the man, nor woo his wife. For the son of Atreus shall be avenged at the hand of Orestes, so soon as he shall come to man's estate and long for his own country. So spake Hermes, yet he prevailed not on the heart of Aegisthus, for all his good will; but now hath he paid one price for all.'

And the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, answered him, saying: 'O father, our father Cronides, throned in the highest; that man assuredly lies in a death that is his due; so perish likewise all who work such deeds! But my heart is rent for wise Odysseus, the hapless one, who far from his friends this long while suffereth affliction in a seagirt isle, where is the navel of the sea, a woodland isle, and therein a goddess hath her habitation, the daughter of the wizard Atlas, who knows the depths of every sea, and himself upholds the tall pillars which keep earth and sky asunder. His daughter it is that holds the hapless man in sorrow: and ever with soft and guileless tales she is wooing him to forgetfulness of Ithaca. But Odysseus yearning to see if it were but the smoke leap upwards from his own land, hath a desire to die. As for thee, thine heart regardeth it not at all, Olympian! What! did not Odysseus by the ships of the Argives make thee free offering of sacrifice in the wide Trojan land? Wherefore wast thou then so wroth with him, O Zeus?

And Zeus the cloud-gatherer answered her, and said, 'My child, what word hath escaped the door of thy lips? Yea, how should I forget divine Odysseus, who in understanding is beyond mortals and beyond all men hath done sacrifice to the deathless gods, who keep the wide heaven? Nay, but it is Poseidon, the girdler of the earth, that hath been wroth continually with quenchless anger for the Cyclops' sake whom he blinded of his eye, even godlike Polyphemus whose power is mightiest amongst all the Cyclôpes. His mother was the nymph Thoösa, daughter of Phorcys, lord of the unharvested sea, and in the hollow caves she lay with Poseidon. From that day forth Poseidon the earth-shaker doth not indeed slay Odysseus, but driveth him wandering from his own country. But come, let us here one and all take good counsel as touching his returning, that he may be got home; so shall Poseidon let go his displeasure, for he will in no wise be able to strive alone against all, in despite of all the deathless gods.'

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, answered him, and said: 'O father, our father Cronides, throned in the highest, if indeed this thing is now well pleasing to the blessed gods, that wise Odysseus should return to his own home, let us then speed Hermes the Messenger, the slayer of Argos, to the island of Ogygia. There with all speed let him declare to the lady of the braided tresses our unerring counsel, even the return of the patient Odysseus, that so he may come to his home. But as for me I will go to Ithaca that I may rouse his son yet the more, planting might in his heart, to call an assembly of the long-haired Achaeans and speak out to all the wooers who slaughter continually the sheep of his thronging flocks, and his kine with trailing feet and shambling gait. And I will guide him to Sparta and to sandy Pylos to seek tidings of his dear father's return, if peradventure he may hear thereof and that so he may be had in good report among men.'

She spake and bound beneath her feet her lovely golden sandals, that wax not old, and bare her alike over the wet sea and over the limitless land, swift as the breath of the wind. And she seized her doughty spear, shod with sharp bronze, weighty and huge and strong, wherewith she quells the ranks of heroes with whomsoever she is wroth, the daughter of the mighty sire. Then from the heights of Olympus she came glancing down, and she stood in the land of Ithaca, at the entry of the gate of Odysseus, on the threshold of the courtyard, holding in her hand the spear of bronze, in the semblance of a stranger, Mentes the captain of the Taphians. And there she found the lordly wooers: now they were taking their pleasure at draughts in front of the doors, sitting on hides of oxen, which themselves had slain. And of the henchmen and the ready squires, some were mixing for them wine and water in bowls, and some again were washing the tables with porous sponges and were setting them forth, and others were carving flesh in plenty.

And godlike Telemachus was far the first to descry her, for he was sitting with a heavy heart among the wooers dreaming on his good father, if haply he might come somewhence, and make a scattering of the wooers there throughout the palace, and himself get honour and bear rule among his own possessions. Thinking thereupon, as he sat among wooers, he saw Athene—and he went straight to the outer porch, for he thought it blame in his heart that a stranger should stand long at the gates: and halting nigh her he clasped her right hand and took from her the spear of bronze, and uttered his voice and spake unto her winged words:

'Hail, stranger, with us thou shalt be kindly entreated, and thereafter, when thou hast tasted meat, thou shalt tell us that whereof thou hast need.'

Therewith he led the way, and Pallas Athene followed. And when they were now within the lofty house, he set her spear that he bore against a tall pillar, within the polished spear-stand, where stood many spears besides, even those of Odysseus of the hardy heart; and he led the goddess and seated her on a goodly carven chair, and spread a linen cloth thereunder, and beneath was a footstool for the feet. For himself he placed an inlaid seat hard by, apart from the company of the wooers, lest the stranger should be disquieted by the noise and should have a loathing for the meal, being come among overweening men, and also that he might ask him about his father that was gone from his home.

Then a handmaid bare water for the washing of hands in a goodly golden ewer, and poured it forth over a silver basin to wash withal, and drew to their side a polished table. And a grave dame bare wheaten bread and set it by them, and laid on the board many dainties, giving freely of such things as she had by her. And a carver lifted and placed by them platters of divers kinds of flesh, and nigh them he set golden bowls, and a henchman walked to and fro pouring out to them the wine.

Then in came the lordly wooers; and they sat them down in rows on chairs and on high seats, and henchmen poured water on their hands, and maidservants piled wheaten bread by them in baskets, and pages crowned the bowls with drink; and they stretched forth their hands upon the good cheer spread before them. Now when the wooers had put from them the desire of meat and drink, they minded them of other things, even of the song and dance: for these are the crown of the feast. And a henchman placed a beauteous lyre in the hands of Phemius, who was minstrel to the wooers despite his will. Yea and as he touched the lyre he lifted up his voice in sweet song.

But Telemachus spake unto grey-eyed Athene, holding his head close to her that those others might not hear: 'Dear stranger, wilt thou of a truth be wroth at the word that I shall say? Yonder men verily care for such things as these, the lyre and song, lightly, as they that devour the livelihood of another without atonement of that man whose white bones, it may be, lie wasting in the rain upon the mainland, or the billow rolls them in the brine. Were but these men to see him returned to Ithaca, they all would pray rather for greater speed of foot than for gain of gold and raiment. But now he hath perished, even so, an evil doom, and for us is no comfort, no, not though any of earthly men should say that he will come again. Gone is the day of his returning! But come declare me this, and tell me all plainly: Who art thou of the sons of men, and whence? Where is thy city, where are they that begat thee? Say, on what manner of ship didst thou come, and how did sailors bring thee to Ithaca, and who did they avow themselves to be, for in nowise do I deem that thou camest hither by land. And herein tell me true, that I may know for a surety whether thou art a newcomer, or whether thou art a guest of the house, seeing that many were the strangers that came to our home, for that *he* too had voyaged much among men.'

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, answered him: 'Yea now, I will plainly tell thee all. I avow me to be Mentes, son of wise Anchialus, and I bear rule among the Taphians, lovers of the oar. And now am I come to shore, as thou seest, with ship and crew, sailing over the wine-dark sea, unto men of strange speech, even to Temesa [in Cyprus], in quest of copper, and my cargo is shining iron. And there my ship is lying toward the upland, away from the city, in the harbour of Rheithron beneath wooded Neïon: and we declare ourselves to be friends one of the other, and of houses friendly, from of old. Nay, if thou wouldest be assured, go ask the old man, the hero Laertes, who they say no more comes to the city, but far away toward the upland suffers affliction, with an ancient woman for his handmaid, who sets by him meat and drink, whensoever weariness takes holds of his limbs, as he creeps along the knoll of his vineyard plot. And now am I come; for verily they said that *he,* thy father, was among his people; but lo, the gods withhold him from his way. For goodly Odysseus hath not yet perished on the earth; but still, methinks, he lives and is kept on the wide deep in a sea-girt isle, and hard men constrain him, wild folk that hold him, it may be, sore against his will. But now of a truth will I utter my word of prophecy, as the Immortals bring it into my heart and as I deem it will be accomplished, though no soothsayer am I, nor skilled in the signs of birds. Henceforth indeed for no long while shall he be far from his own dear country, not though bonds of iron bind him; he will advise him of a way to return, for he is a man of many devices. But come, declare me this, and tell me all plainly, whether indeed, so tall as thou art, thou art sprung from the loins of Odysseus. Thy head surely and thy beauteous eyes are wondrous like to his, since full many a time have we held converse together ere he embarked for Troy, whither the others, aye the bravest of the Argives, went in hollow ships. From that day forth neither have I seen Odysseus, nor he me.'

Then wise Telemachus answered her, and said: 'Yea, sir, now will I plainly tell thee all. My mother verily saith that I am his; for myself I know not, for never man yet knew of himself his own descent. O that I had been the son of some blessed man, whom old age overtook among his own possessions! But now of him that is the most hapless of mortal men, his son they say that I am, since thou dost question me hereof.'

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, spake unto him, and said: ‘Surely no nameless lineage have the gods ordained for thee in days to come, since Penelopé bore thee so goodly a man. But come, declare me this, and tell it all plainly. What feast, nay, what rout is this? What hast thou to do therewith? Is it a clan drinking, or a wedding feast, for here we have no banquet where each man brings his share? In such wise, flown with insolence, do they seem to me to revel wantonly through the house: and well might any man be wroth to see so many deeds of shame, whatso wise man came among them.’

Then wise Telemachus answered her, and said: ‘Sir, forasmuch as thou questionest me of these things and inquirest thereof, our house was once like to have been rich and honourable, while yet that man was among his people. But now the gods willed it otherwise, in evil purpose, who have made him pass utterly out of sight as no man ever before. Truly I would not even for his death make so great sorrow, had he fallen among his fellows in the land of the Trojans, or in the arms of his friends when he had wound up the clew of war. Then would the whole Achaean host have builded him a barrow, and even for his son would he have won great glory in the after days. But now the spirits of the storm have swept him away inglorious. He is gone, lost to sight and hearsay, but for me hath he left anguish and lamentation; nor henceforth is it for him alone that I mourn and weep, since the gods have wrought for me other sore distress. For all the noblest that are princes in the isles, in Dulichium and Same and wooded Zacynthus, and as many as lord it in rocky Ithaca, all these woo my mother and waste my house. But as for her she neither refuseth the hated bridal, nor hath the heart to make an end: so they devour and minish my house, and ere long will they make havoc likewise of myself.’

Then in heavy displeasure spake unto him Pallas Athene: ‘God help thee! thou art surely sore in need of Odysseus that is afar, to stretch forth his hands upon the shameless wooers. If he could but come now and stand at the entering in of the gate, with helmet and shield and lances twain, as mighty a man as when first I marked him in our house drinking and making merry what time he came up out of Ephyra from Ilus son of

Mermerus! For even thither had Odysseus gone on his swift ship to seek a deadly drug, that he might have wherewithal to smear his bronze-shod arrows: but Ilus would in nowise give it him, for he had in awe the everliving gods. But my father gave it him, for he bare him wondrous love. O that Odysseus might in such strength consort with the wooers: so should they all have swift fate and bitter wedlock! Howbeit these things surely lie on the knees of the gods, whether he shall return or not, and take vengeance in his halls. But I charge thee to take counsel how thou mayest thrust forth the wooers from the hall. Come now, mark and take heed unto my words. On the morrow call the Achaean lords to the assembly, and declare thy saying to all, and take the gods to witness. As for the wooers bid them scatter them each one to his own, and for thy mother, if her heart is moved to marriage, let her go back to the hall of that mighty man her father, and her kinsfolk will furnish a wedding feast, and array the gifts of wooing exceeding many, all that should go back with a daughter dearly beloved. And to thyself I will give a word of wise counsel, if perchance thou wilt hearken. Fit out a ship, the best thou hast, with twenty oarsmen, and go to inquire concerning thy father that is long afar, if perchance any man shall tell thee aught, or if thou mayest hear the voice from Zeus, which chiefly brings tidings to men. Get thee first to Pylos and inquire of goodly Nestor and from thence to Sparta to Menelaus of the fair hair, for he came home the last of the mail-coated Achaeans. If thou shalt hear news of the life and the returning of thy father, then verily thou mayest endure the wasting for yet a year. But if thou shalt hear that he is dead and gone, return then to thine own dear country and pile his mound, and over it pay burial rites, full many as is due, and give thy mother to a husband. But when thou hast done this and made an end, thereafter take counsel in thy mind and heart, how thou mayest slay the wooers in thy halls, whether by guile or openly; for thou shouldest not carry childish thoughts, being no longer of years thereto. Or hast thou not heard what renown the goodly Orestes gat him among all men in that he slew the slayer of his father, guileful Aegisthus, who killed his famous sire? And thou, too, my friend, for I see that thou art very comely and tall, be valiant, that even men unborn may praise thee. But I will now go down to the swift ship and to my men, who methinks chafe much at tarrying for me; and do thou thyself take heed and give ear unto my words.'

Then wise Telemachus answered her, saying: 'Sir, verily thou speakest these things out of a friendly heart, as a father to his son, and never will I forget them. But now I pray thee abide here, though eager to be gone, to the end that after thou hast bathed and had all thy heart's desire, thou mayst wend to the ship joyful in spirit, with a costly gift and very goodly, to be an heirloom of my giving, such as dear friends give to friends.'

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, answered him: 'Hold me now no longer, that am eager for the way. But whatsoever gift thine heart shall bid thee give me, when I am on my way back let it be mine to carry home: bear from thy stores a gift right goodly, and it shall bring thee the worth thereof in return.'

So spake she and departed, the grey-eyed Athene, and like an eagle of the sea she flew away, but in his spirit she planted might and courage, and put him in mind of his father yet more than heretofore. And he marked the thing and was amazed, for he deemed that it was a god; and anon he went among the wooers, a godlike man.

Now the renowned minstrel was singing to the wooers, and they sat listening in silence; and his song was of the pitiful return of the Achaeans, that Pallas Athene laid on them as they came forth from Troy. And from her upper chamber the daughter of Icarius, wise Penelope, caught the glorious strain, and she went down the high stairs from her chamber, not alone, for two of her handmaids bare her company. Now when the fair lady had come unto the wooers, she stood by the door-post of the well-builded roof holding up her glistening tire before her face; and a faithful maiden stood on either side her. Then she fell aweeping, and spake unto the divine minstrel:

'Phemius, since thou knowest many other charms for mortals, deeds of men and gods, which bards rehearse, some one of these do thou sing as thou sittest by them, and let them drink their wine in silence; but cease from this pitiful strain that ever wastes my heart within my breast, since to me above all women hath come a sorrow comfortless. So dear a head do I long for in constant memory, namely, that man whose fame is noised abroad from Hellas to mid Argos.'

Then wise Telemachus answered her, and said: 'O my mother, why then dost thou grudge the sweet minstrel to gladden us as his spirit moves him? It is not minstrels who are in fault, but Zeus, methinks, is in fault, who gives to men, that live by bread, to each one as he will. As for him it is no blame if he sings the ill-faring of the Danaans; for men always prize that song the most, which rings newest in their ears. But let thy heart and mind endure to listen, for not Odysseus only lost in Troy the day of his returning, but many another likewise perished. Howbeit go to thy chamber and mind thine own housewiferies, the loom and distaff, and bid thy handmaids ply their tasks. But speech shall be for men, for all, but for me in chief; for mine is the lordship in the house.'

Then in amaze she went back to her chamber, for she laid up the wise saying of her son in her heart. She ascended to her upper chamber with the women her handmaids, and then was bewailing Odysseus, her dear lord, till grey-eyed Athene cast sweet sleep upon her eyelids.

Now the wooers clamoured throughout the shadowy halls, and each one uttered a prayer to be her bedfellow. And wise Telemachus first spake among them:

'Wooers of my mother, men despiteful out of measure, let us feast now and make merry and let there be no brawling; for, lo, it is a good thing to list to a minstrel such as him, like to the gods in voice. But in the morning let us all go to the assembly and sit us down, that I may declare my saying outright, to wit that ye leave these halls: and busy yourselves with other feasts, eating your own substance, going in turn from house to house. But if ye deem this a likelier and a better thing, that one man's goods should perish without atonement, then waste ye as ye will; and I will call upon the everlasting gods, if haply Zeus may grant that acts of recompense be made: so should ye hereafter perish within the halls without atonement.'

So spake he, and all that heard him bit their lips and marvelled at Telemachus, in that he spake boldly.

Then Antinous, son of Eupeithes, answered him: 'Telemachus, in very truth the gods themselves instruct thee to be proud of speech and boldly to harangue. Never may Cronion make thee king in seagirt Ithaca, which thing is of inheritance thy right!'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, and said: 'Antinous, wilt thou indeed be wroth at the word that I shall say? Yea, at the hand of Zeus would I be fain to take even this thing upon me. Sayest thou that this is the worst hap that can befal a man? Nay, verily it is no ill thing to be a king: the house of such an one quickly waxeth rich and himself is held in greater honour. Howsoever there are many other kings of the Achaeans in seagirt Ithaca, kings young and old; someone of them shall surely have this kingship since goodly Odysseus is dead. But as for me, I will be lord of our own house and thralls, that goodly Odysseus gat me with his spear.'

Then Eurymachus, son of Polybus, answered him, saying: 'Telemachus, on the knees of the gods it surely lies, what man is to be king over the Achaeans in seagirt Ithaca. But mayest thou keep thine own possessions and be lord in thine own house! Never may that man come, who shall wrest from thee thy substance violently in thine own despite, while Ithaca yet stands. But I would ask thee, friend, concerning the stranger—whence he is, and of what land he avows him to be? Where are his kin and his native fields? Doth he bear some tidings of thy father on his road, or cometh he thus to speed some matter of his own? In such wise did he start up, and lo, he was gone, nor tarried he that we should know him;—and yet he seemed no mean man to look upon.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, and said: 'Eurymachus, surely the day of my father's returning hath gone by. Therefore no more do I put faith in tidings, whencesoever they may come, neither have I regard unto any divination, whereof my mother may inquire at the lips of a diviner, when she hath bidden him to the hall. But as for that man, he is a friend of my house from Taphos, and he avows him to be Mentes, son of wise Anchialus, and he hath lordship among the Taphians, lovers of the oar.'

So spake Telemachus, but in his heart he knew the deathless goddess. Now the wooers turned them to the dance and the delightsome song, and made merry, and waited till evening should come on. And as they made merry, dusk evening came upon them. Then they went each one to his own house to lie down to rest.

But Telemachus, where his chamber was builded high up in the fair court, in a place with wide prospect, thither betook him to his bed, pondering many thoughts in his mind; and with him went trusty Eurycleia, and bare for him torches burning. She was the daughter of Ops, son of Peisenor, and Laertes bought her on a time with his wealth, while as yet she was in her first youth, and gave for her the worth of twenty oxen. And he honoured her even as he honoured his dear wife in the halls, but he never lay with her, for he shunned the wrath of his lady. She went with Telemachus and bare for him the burning torches: and of all the women of the household she loved him most, and she had nursed him when a little one. Then he opened the doors of the well-builded chamber and sat him on the bed and took off his soft doublet, and put it in the wise old woman's hands. So she folded the doublet and smoothed it, and hung it on a pin by the jointed bedstead, and went forth on her way from the room, and pulled to the door with the silver handle, and drew home the bar with the thong. There, all night through, wrapt in a fleece of wool, he meditated in his heart upon the journey that Athene had showed him.

BOOK II

Telemachus complains in vain, and borrowing a ship, goes secretly to Pylos by night. And how he was there received.

Now so soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, the dear son of Odysseus gat him up from his bed, and put on his raiment and cast his sharp sword about his shoulder, and beneath his smooth feet he bound his goodly sandals, and stept forth from his chamber in presence like a god. And straightway he bade the clear-voiced heralds to call the long-haired Achaeans to the assembly. And the heralds called the gathering, and the Achaeans were assembled quickly. Now when they were gathered and come together, he went on his way to the assembly holding in his hand a spear of bronze,—not alone he went, for two swift hounds bare him company. Then Athene shed on him a wondrous grace, and all the people marvelled at him as he came. And he sat him in his father's seat and the elders gave place to him.

Then the lord Aegyptus spake among them first; bowed was he with age, and skilled in things past number. Now for this reason he spake that his dear son had gone in the hollow ships to Ilios of the goodly steeds, the warrior Antiphus; but the savage Cyclops slew him in his hollow cave, and made of him then his latest meal. Three other sons Aegyptus had, and one consorted with the wooers, Eurynomus, but two continued in their father's fields; yet even so forgat he not that son, still mourning and sorrowing. So weeping for his sake he made harangue and spake among them:

'Hearken now to me, ye men of Ithaca, to the word that I shall say. Never hath our assembly or session been since the day that goodly Odysseus departed in the hollow ships. And now who was minded thus to assemble us? On what man hath such sore need come, of the young men or of the elder born? Hath he heard some tidings of the host now returning, which he might plainly declare to us, for that he first learned thereof, or doth he show forth and tell some other mat-

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ter of the common weal? Methinks he is a true man—good luck be with him! Zeus vouchsafe him some good thing in his turn, even all his heart's desire!'

So spake he, and the dear son of Odysseus was glad at the omen of the word; nor sat he now much longer, but he burned to speak, and he stood in mid assembly; and the herald Peisenor, skilled in sage counsels, placed the staff in his hands. Then he spake, accosting the old man first:

'Old man, he is not far off, and soon shalt thou know it for thyself, he who called the folk together, even I: for sorrow hath come to me in chief. Neither have I heard any tidings of the host now returning, which I may plainly declare to you, for that I first learned thereof; neither do I show forth or tell any other matter of the common weal, but mine own need, for that evil hath befallen my house, a double woe. First, I have lost my noble sire, who sometime was king among you here, and was gentle as a father; and now is there an evil yet greater far, which surely shall soon make grievous havoc of my whole house and ruin all my livelihood. My mother did certain wooers beset sore against her will, even the sons of those men that here are the noblest. They are too craven to go to the house of her father Icarius, that he may himself set the bride-price for his daughter, and bestow her on whom he will, even on him who finds favour in his sight. But they resorting to our house day by day sacrifice oxen and sheep and fat goats, and keep revel, and drink the dark wine recklessly, and lo, our great wealth is wasted, for there is no man now alive such as Odysseus was, to keep ruin from the house. As for me I am nowise strong like him to ward mine own; verily to the end of my days shall I be a weakling and all unskilled in prowess. Truly I would defend me if but strength were mine; for deeds past sufferance have now been wrought, and now my house is wasted utterly beyond pretence of right. Resent it in your own hearts, and have regard to your neighbours who dwell around, and tremble ye at the anger of the gods, lest haply they turn upon you in wrath at your evil deeds. I pray you by Olympian Zeus and by Themis, who looseth and gathereth the meetings of men, let be, my friends, and leave me alone to waste in bitter grief;—unless it so be that my father, the good Odysseus, out of evil heart wrought harm to the goodly-greaved Achaeans, in quittance whereof ye now work me harm out of evil hearts, and spur on these men. Better for me that ye yourselves should eat up my treasures and my flocks. Were *ye* so to devour them, ere long would some recompense be made, for we would urge our plea throughout the town, begging back our substance, until all should be restored. But now without remedy are the pains that ye lay up in my heart.'

So spake he in wrath, and dashed the staff to the ground, and brake forth in tears; and pity fell on all the people. Then all the others held their peace, and none had the heart to answer Telemachus with hard words, but Antinous alone made answer, saying:

'Telemachus, proud of speech and unrestrained in fury, what is this thou hast said to put us to shame, and wouldst fasten on us reproach? Behold the fault is not in the Achaean wooers, but in thine own mother, for she is the craftiest of women. For it is now the third year, and the fourth is fast going by, since she began to deceive the minds of the Achaeans in their breasts. She gives hope to all, and makes promises to every man, and sends them messages, but her mind is set on other things. And she hath devised in her heart this wile besides; she set up in her halls a mighty web, fine of woof and very wide, whereat she would weave, and anon she spake among us:

'"Ye princely youths, my wooers, now that the goodly Odysseus is dead, do ye abide patiently, how eager soever to speed on this marriage of mine, till I finish the robe. I would not that the threads perish to no avail, even this shroud for the hero Laertes, against the day when the ruinous doom shall bring him low, of death that lays men at their length. So shall none of the Achaean women in the land count it blame in me, as well might be, were he to lie without a winding-sheet, a man that had gotten great possessions."

'So spake she, and our high hearts consented thereto. So then in the day time she would weave the mighty web, and in the night unravel the same, when she had let place the torches by her. Thus for the space of three years she hid the thing by craft and beguiled the minds of the Achaeans; but when the fourth year arrived and the seasons came round, then at the last one of her women who knew all declared it, and we found her unravelling the splendid web. Thus she finished it perforce and sore against her will. But as for thee, the wooers make thee answer thus, that thou mayest know it in thine own heart, thou and all the Achaeans! Send away thy mother, and bid her be married to whomsoever her father commands, and whoso is well pleasing unto her. But if she will continue for long to vex the sons of the Achaeans, pondering in her heart those things that Athene hath given her beyond women, knowledge of all fair handiwork, yea, and cunning wit, and wiles—so be it! Such wiles as hers we have never yet heard that any even of the women of old did know, of those that aforetime were fair-tressed Achaean ladies, Tyro, and Alcmene, and Mycene with the bright crown. Not one of these in the imaginations of their hearts was like unto Penelope, yet herein at least her imagining was not good. For in despite of her the wooers will devour thy living and thy substance, so long as she is steadfast in such purpose as the gods now put within her breast: great renown for herself she winneth, but for thee regret for thy much livelihood. But we will neither go to our own lands, nor otherwhere, till she marry that man whom she will of the Achaeans.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'Antinous, I may in no wise thrust forth from the house, against her will, the woman that bare me, that reared me: while as for my father he is abroad on the earth, whether he be alive or dead. Moreover it is hard for me to make heavy restituition to Icarius, as needs I must, if of mine own will I send my mother away. For I shall have evil at his hand, at the hand of her father, and some god will give me more besides, for my mother will call down the dire Avengers as she departs from the house, and I shall have blame of men; surely then I will never speak this word. Nay, if your own heart, even yours, is indignant, quit ye my halls, and busy yourselves with other feasts, eating your own substance, and going in turn from house to house. But if ye deem this a likelier and a better thing, that one man's goods should perish without atonement, then waste ye as ye will: and I will call upon the everlasting gods, if haply Zeus may grant that acts of recompense be made: so should ye hereafter perish in the halls without atonement.'

So spake Telemachus, and in answer to his prayer did Zeus, of the far-borne voice, send forth two eagles in flight, from on high, from the mountain-crest. Awhile they flew as fleet as the blasts of the wind, side by side, with straining of their pinions. But when they had now reached the mid assembly, the place of many voices, there they wheeled about and flapped their strong wings, and looked down upon the heads of all, and destruction was in their gaze. Then tore they with their talons each the other's cheeks and neck on every side, and so sped to the right across the dwellings and the city of the people. And the men marvelled at the birds when they had sight of them, and pondered in their hearts the things that should come to pass. Yea and the old man, the lord Halitherses son of Mastor spake among them, for he excelled his peers in knowledge of birds, and in uttering words of fate. With good will he made harangue and spake among them:

'Hearken to me now, ye men of Ithaca, to the word that I shall say: and mainly to the wooers do I show forth and tell these things, seeing that a mighty woe is rolling upon them. For Odysseus shall not long be away from his friends, nay, even now, it may be, he is near, and sowing the seeds of death and fate for these men, every one; and he will be a bane to many another likewise of us who dwell in clear-seen Ithaca. But long ere that falls out let us advise us how we may make an end of their mischief, yea, let them of their own selves make an end, for this is the better way for them, as will soon be seen. For I prophesy not as one unproved, but with sure knowledge; verily, I say, that for him all things now are come to pass, even as I told him, what time the Argives embarked for Ilios, and with them went the wise Odysseus. I said that after sore affliction, with the loss of all his company, unknown to all, in the twentieth year he should come home. And behold, all these things now have an end.'

And Eurymachus, son of Polybus, answered him, saying: 'Go now, old man, get thee home and prophesy to thine own children, lest haply they suffer harm hereafter: but herein am

I a far better prophet than thou. Howbeit there be many birds that fly to and fro under the sun's rays, but all are not birds of fate. Now as for Odysseus, he hath perished far away, as would that thou too with him hadst been cut off: so wouldst thou not have babbled thus much prophecy, nor wouldst thou hound on Telemachus that is already angered, expecting a gift for thy house, if perchance he may vouchsafe thee aught. But now will I speak out, and my word shall surely be accomplished. If thou that knowest much lore from of old, shalt beguile with words a younger man, and rouse him to indignation, first it shall be a great grief to him:—and yet he can count on no aid from these who hear him;—while upon thee, old man, we will lay a fine, that thou mayest pay it and chafe at heart, and sore pain shall be thine. And I myself will give a word of counsel of Telemachus in presence of you all. Let him command his mother to return to her father's house; and her kinsfolk will furnish a wedding feast, and array the gifts of wooing, exceeding many, all that should go back with a daughter dearly beloved. For ere that, I trow, we sons of the Achaeans will not cease from our rough wooing, since, come what may, we fear not any man, no, not Telemachus, full of words though he be, nor soothsaying do we heed, whereof thou, old man, pratest idly, and art hated yet the more. His substance too shall be woefully devoured, nor shall recompense ever be made, so long as she shall put off the Achaeans in the matter of her marriage; while we in expectation, from day to day, vie one with another for the prize of her perfection, nor go we after other women whom it were meet that we should each one wed.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'Eurymachus, and ye others, that are lordly wooers, I entreat you no more concerning this nor speak thereof, for the gods have knowledge of it now and all the Achaeans. But come, give me a swift ship and twenty men, who shall accomplish for me my voyage to and fro. For I will go to Sparta and to sandy Pylos to inquire concerning the return of my father that is long afar, if perchance any man shall tell me aught, or if I may hear the voice from Zeus, that chiefly brings tidings to men. If I shall hear news of the life and the returning of my father, then verily I may endure the wasting for yet a year; but if I shall hear that he is dead and gone, let me then return to my own dear country, and pile his mound, and over it pay burial rites full many as is due, and I will give my mother to a husband.'

So with that word he sat him down; then in the midst uprose Mentor, the companion of noble Odysseus. He it was to whom Odysseus, as he departed in the fleet, had given the charge over all his house, that it should obey the old man, and that he should keep all things safe. With good will he now made harangue and spake among them:

'Hearken to me now, ye men of Ithaca, to the word that I shall say. Henceforth let not any sceptred king be kind and gentle with all his heart, nor minded to do righteously, but let him alway be a hard man and work unrighteousness: for behold, there is none that remembereth divine Odysseus of the people whose lord he was, and was gentle as a father. Howsoever, it is not that I grudge the lordly wooers their deeds of violence in the evil devices of their heart. For at the hazard of their own heads they violently devour the household of Odysseus, and say of him that he will come no more again. But I am indeed wroth with the rest of the people, to see how ye all sit thus speechless, and do not cry shame upon the wooers, and put them down, ye that are so many and they so few.'

And Leocritus, son of Euenor, answered him, saying: 'Mentor Infatuate, with thy wandering wits, what word hast thou spoken, that callest upon them to put us down? Nay, it is a hard thing to fight about a feast, and that with men who are even more in number than you. Though Odysseus of Ithaca himself should come and were eager of heart to drive forth from the hall the lordly wooers that feast throughout his house, yet should his wife have no joy of his coming, though she yearns for him;—but even there should he meet foul doom, if he fought with those that outnumbered him; so thou hast not spoken aright. But as for the people, come now, scatter yourselves each one to his own lands, but Mentor and Halitherses will speed this man's voyage, for they are friends of his house from of old. Yet after all, methinks, that long time he will abide and seek tidings in Ithaca, and never accomplish this voyage.'

Thus he spake, and in haste they broke up the assembly. So they were scattered each one to his own dwelling, while the wooers departed to the house of divine Odysseus.

Then Telemachus, going far apart to the shore of the sea, laved his hands in the grey sea water, and prayed unto Athene, saying: 'Hear me, thou who yesterday didst come in thy godhead to our house, and badest me go in a ship across the misty seas, to seek tidings of the return of my father that is long gone: but all this my purpose do the Achaeans delay, and mainly the wooers in the naughtiness of their pride.'

So spake he in prayer, and Athene drew nigh him in the likeness of Mentor, in fashion and in voice, and she spake and hailed him in winged words:

'Telemachus, even hereafter thou shalt not be craven or witless, if indeed thou hast a drop of thy father's blood and a portion of his spirit; such an one was he to fulfil both word and work. Nor, if this be so, shall thy voyage be vain or unfulfilled. But if thou art not the very seed of him and of Penelope, then have I no hope that thou wilt accomplish thy desire. For few children, truly, are like their father; lo, the more part are worse, yet a few are better than the sire. But since thou shalt not even hereafter be craven or witless, nor hath the wisdom of Odysseus failed thee quite, so is there good hope of thine accomplishing this work. Wherefore now take no heed of the counsel or the purpose of the senseless wooers, for they are in no way wise or just: neither know they aught of death and of black fate, which already is close upon them, that they are all to perish in one day. But the voyage on which thy heart is set shall not long be lacking to thee—so faithful a friend of thy father am I, who will furnish thee a swift ship and myself be thy companion. But go thou to the house, and consort with the wooers, and make ready corn, and bestow all in vessels, the wine in jars and barley-flour, the marrow of men, in well-sewn skins; and I will lightly gather in the township a crew that offer themselves willingly. There are many ships, new and old, in seagirt Ithaca; of these I will choose out the best for thee, and we will quickly rig her and launch her on the broad deep.'

So spake Athene, daughter of Zeus, and Telemachus made no long tarrying, when he had heard the voice of the goddess. He went on his way towards the house, heavy at heart, and there he found the noble wooers in the halls, flaying goats and singeing swine in the court. And Antinous laughed out and went straight to Telemachus, and clasped his hand and spake and hailed him:

'Telemachus, proud of speech and unrestrained in fury, let no evil word any more be in thy heart, nor evil work, but let me see thee eat and drink as of old. And the Achaeans will make thee ready all things without fail, a ship and chosen oarsmen, that thou mayest come the quicker to fair Pylos, to seek tidings of thy noble father.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, saying, 'Antinous, in no wise in your proud company can I sup in peace, and make merry with a quiet mind. Is it a little thing, ye wooers, that in time past ye wasted many good things of my getting, while as yet I was a child? But now that I am a man grown, and learn the story from the lips of others, and my spirit waxeth within me, I will seek to let loose upon you evil fates, as I may, going either to Pylos for help, or abiding here in this township. Yea, I will go, nor vain shall the voyage be whereof I speak; a passenger on another's ship go I, for I am not to have a ship nor oarsmen of mine own; so in your wisdom ye have thought it for the better.'

He spake and snatched his hand from out the hand of Antinous, lightly, and all the while the wooers were busy feasting through the house; and they mocked him and sharply taunted him, and thus would some proud youth speak:

'In very truth Telemachus planneth our destruction. He will bring a rescue either from sandy Pylos, or even it may be from Sparta, so terribly is he set on slaying us. Or else he will go to Ephyra, a fruitful land, to fetch a poisonous drug that he may cast it into the bowl and make an end of all of us.'

And again another proud youth would say: 'Who knows but that he himself if he goes hence on the hollow ship, may perish wandering far from his friends, even as Odysseus? So should we have yet more ado, for then must we divide among us all his substance, and moreover give the house to his mother to possess it, and to him whosoever should wed her.'

So spake they; but he stepped down into the vaulted treasure-chamber of his father, a spacious room, where gold and bronze lay piled, and raiment in coffers, and fragrant olive oil in plenty. And there stood casks of sweet wine and old, full of the unmixed drink divine, all orderly ranged by the wall, ready if ever Odysseus should come home, albeit after travail and much pain. And the close-fitted doors, the folding doors, were shut, and night and day there abode within a dame in charge, who guarded all in the fulness of her wisdom, Eurycleia, daughter of Ops son of Peisenor. Telemachus now called her into the chamber and spake unto her, saying:

'Mother, come draw off for me sweet wine in jars, the choicest next to that thou keepest mindful ever of that ill-fated one, Odysseus, of the seed of Zeus, if perchance he may come I know not whence, having avoided death and the fates. So fill twelve jars, and close each with his lid, and pour me barley-meal into well-sewn skins, and let there be twenty measures of the grain of bruised barley-meal. Let none know this but thyself! As for these things let them all be got together; for in the evening I will take them with me, at the time that my mother hath gone to her upper chamber and turned her thoughts to sleep. Lo, to Sparta I go and to sandy Pylos to seek tidings of my dear father's return, if haply I may hear thereof.'

So spake he, and the good nurse Eurycleia wailed aloud, and making lament spake to him winged words: 'Ah, wherefore, dear child, hath such a thought arisen in thine heart? How shouldst thou fare over wide lands, thou that art an only child and well-beloved? As for him he hath perished, Odysseus of the seed of Zeus, far from his own country in the land of strangers. And yonder men, so soon as thou art gone, will devise mischief against thee thereafter, that thou mayest perish by guile, and they will share among them all this wealth of thine. Nay, abide here, settled on thine own lands: thou hast no need upon the deep unharvested to suffer evil and go wandering.'

Then wise Telemachus answered her, saying: 'Take heart, nurse, for lo, this my purpose came not but of a god. But swear that thou wilt not tell it to my dear mother, till at least it shall be the eleventh or twelfth day from hence, or till she miss me of herself, and hear of my departure, that so she may not mar her fair face with her tears.'

Thus he spake, and the old woman sware a great oath by the gods not to reveal it. But when she had sworn and done that oath, straightway she drew off the wine for him in jars, and poured barley-meal into well-sewn skins, and Telemachus departed to the house and consorted with the wooers.

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, turned to other thoughts. In the likeness of Telemachus she went all through the city, and stood by each one of the men and spake her saying, and bade them gather at even by the swift ship. Furthermore, she craved a swift ship of Noëmon, famous son of Phronius, and right gladly he promised it.

Now the sun sank and all the ways were darkened. Then at length she let drag the swift ship to the sea and stored within it all such tackling as decked ships carry. And she moored it at the far end of the harbour and the good company was gathered together, and the goddess cheered on all.

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, turned to other thoughts. She went on her way to the house of divine Odysseus; and there she shed sweet sleep upon the wooers and made them distraught in their drinking, and cast the cups from their hands. And they arose up to go to rest throughout the city, nor sat they yet a long while, for slumber was falling on their eyelids. Now grey-eyed Athene spake unto Telemachus, and called him from out the fair-lying halls, taking the likeness of Mentor, both in fashion and in voice:

'Telemachus, thy goodly-greaved companions are sitting already at their oars, it is thy despatch they are awaiting. Nay then, let us go, that we delay them not long from the way.'

Therewith Pallas Athene led the way quickly, and he followed hard in the steps of the goddess. Now when they had come down to the ship and to the sea, they found the long-haired youths of the company on the shore; and the mighty prince Telemachus spake among them:

'Come hither, friends, let us carry the corn on board, for all is now together in the room, and my mother knows nought thereof, nor any of the maidens of the house: one woman only heard my saying.'

Thus he spake and led the way, and they went with him. So they brought all and stowed it in the decked ship, according to the word of the dear son of Odysseus. Then Telemachus climbed the ship, and Athene went before him, and behold, she sat her down in the stern, and near her sat Telemachus. And the men loosed the hawsers and climbed on board themselves, and sat down upon the benches. And grey-eyed Athene sent them a favourable gale, a fresh West Wind, singing over the wine-dark sea.

And Telemachus called unto his company and bade them lay hands on the tackling, and they hearkened to his call. So they raised the mast of pine tree and set it in the hole of the cross plank, and made it fast with forestays, and hauled up the white sails with twisted ropes of oxhide. And the wind filled the belly of the sail, and the dark wave seethed loudly round the stem of the running ship, and she fleeted over the wave, accomplishing her path. Then they made all fast in the swift black ship, and set mixing bowls brimmed with wine, and poured drink offering to the deathless gods that are from everlasting, and in chief to the grey-eyed daughter of Zeus. So all night long and through the dawn the ship cleft her way.

BOOK III

Nestor entertains Telemachus at Pylos and tells him how the Greeks departed from Troy; and sends him for further information to Sparta.

Now the sun arose and left the lovely mere, speeding to the brazen heaven, to give light to the immortals and to mortal men on the earth, the graingiver, and they reached Pylos, the stablished castle of Neleus. There the people were doing sacrifice on the sea shore, slaying black bulls without spot to the dark-haired god, the shaker of the earth. Nine companies there were, and five hundred men sat in each, and in every company they held nine bulls ready to hand. Just as they had tasted the inner parts, and were burning the slices of the thighs on the altar to the god, the others were bearing straight to land, and brailed up the sails of the gallant ship, and moored her, and themselves came forth. And Telemachus too stept forth from the ship, and Athene led the way. And the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, spake first to him, saying:

'Telemachus, thou needest not now be abashed, no, not one whit. For to this very end didst thou sail over the deep, that thou mightest hear tidings of thy father, even where the earth closed over him, and what manner of death he met. But come now, go straight to Nestor, tamer of horses: let us learn what counsel he hath in the secret of his heart. And beseech him thyself that he may give unerring answer; and he will not lie to thee, for he is very wise.'

The wise Telemachus answered, saying: 'Mentor, and how shall I go, how shall I greet him, I, who am untried in words of wisdom? Moreover a young man may well be abashed to question an elder.'

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, spake to him again: 'Telemachus, thou shalt bethink thee of somewhat in thine own breast, and somewhat the god will give thee to say. For thou, methinks, of all men wert not born and bred without the will of the gods.'

So spake Pallas Athene and led the way quickly; and he followed hard in the steps of the goddess. And they came to the gathering and the session of the men of Pylos. There was Nestor seated with his sons, and round him his company making ready the feast, and roasting some of the flesh and spitting other. Now when they saw the strangers, they went all together, and clasped their hands in welcome, and would have them sit down. First Peisistratus, son of Nestor, drew nigh, and took the hands of each, and made them to sit down at the feast on soft fleeces upon the sea sand, beside his brother Thrasymedes and his father. And he gave them messes of the inner meat, and poured wine into a golden cup, and pledging her, he spake unto Pallas Athene, daughter of Zeus, lord of the aegis:

‘Pray now, my guest, to the lord Poseidon, even as it is his feast whereon ye have chanced in coming hither. And when thou hast made drink-offering and prayed, as is due, give thy friend also the cup of honeyed wine to make offering thereof, inasmuch as he too, methinks, prayeth to the deathless gods, for all men stand in need of the gods. Howbeit he is younger and mine own equal in years, therefore to thee first will I give the golden chalice.’

Therewith he placed in her hand the cup of sweet wine. And Athene rejoiced in the wisdom and judgment of the man, in that he had given to her first the chalice of gold. And straightway she prayed, and that instantly, to the lord Poseidon:

‘Hear me, Poseidon, girdler of the earth, and grudge not the fulfilment of this labour in answer to our prayer. To Nestor first and to his sons vouchsafe renown, and thereafter grant to all the people of Pylos a gracious recompense for this splendid hecatomb. Grant moreover that Telemachus and I may return, when we have accomplished that for which we came hither with our swift black ship.’

Now as she prayed on this wise, herself the while was fulfilling the prayer. And she gave Telemachus the fair double cup; and in like manner prayed the dear son of Odysseus. Then, when the others had roasted the outer parts and drawn them off the spits, they divided the messes and shared the glorious feast. But when they had put from them the desire of meat and drink, Nestor of Gerenia, lord of chariots, first spake among them:

‘Now is the better time to enquire and ask of the strangers who they are, now that they have had their delight of food. Strangers, who are ye? Whence sail ye over the wet ways? On some trading enterprise, or at adventure do ye rove, even as sea-robbers, over the brine, for they wander at hazard of their own lives bringing bale to alien men?’

Then wise Telemachus answered and spake with courage, for Athene herself had put boldness in his heart, that he might ask about his father who was afar, and that he might be had in good report among men:

‘Nestor, son of Neleus, great glory of the Achaeans, thou askest whence we are, and I will surely tell thee all. We have come forth out of Ithaca that is below Neïon; and this our quest whereof I speak is a matter of mine own, and not of the common weal. I follow after the far-spread rumour of my father, if haply I may hear thereof, even of the goodly steadfast Odysseus, who upon a time, men say, fought by thy side and sacked the city of the Trojans. For of all the others, as many as warred with the Trojans, we hear tidings, and where each one fell by a pitiful death; but even the death of this man Cronion hath left untold. For none can surely declare the place where he hath perished, whether he was smitten by foemen on the mainland, or lost upon the deep among the waves of Amphitrite. So now am I come hither to thy knees, if perchance thou art willing to tell me of his pitiful death, as one that saw it with thine own eyes, or heard the story from some other wanderer,—for his mother bare him to exceeding sorrow. And speak me no soft words in ruth or pity, but tell me plainly what sight thou didst get of him. Ah! I pray thee, if ever at all my father, noble Odysseus, made promise to thee of word or work, and fulfilled the same in the land of the Trojans, where ye Achaeans suffered affliction; these things, I pray thee, now remember and tell me truth.'

Then Nestor of Gerenia, lord of chariots, answered him: 'My friend, since thou hast brought sorrow back to mind, behold, this is the story of the woe which we endured in that land, we sons of the Achaeans, unrestrained in fury, and of all that we bore in wanderings after spoil, sailing with our ships over the misty deep, wheresoever Achilles led; and of all our war round the mighty burg of king Priam. Yea and there the best of us were slain. There lies valiant Aias, and there Achilles, and there Patroclus, the peer of the gods in counsel, and there my own dear son, strong and noble, Antilochus, that excelled in speed of foot and in the fight. And many other ills we suffered beside these; who of mortal men could tell the tale? Nay none, though thou wert to abide here for five years, ay and for six, and ask of all the ills which the goodly Achaeans then endured. Ere all was told thou wouldst be weary and turn to thine own country. For nine whole years we were busy about them devising their ruin with all manner of craft; and scarce did Cronion bring it to pass. There never a man durst match with him in wisdom, for goodly Odysseus very far out did the rest in all manner of craft, Odysseus thy father, if indeed thou art his son,—amazement comes upon me as I look at thee; for verily thy speech is like unto his; none would say that a younger man would speak so like an elder. Now look you, all the while that myself and goodly Odysseus were there, we never spake diversely either in the assembly or in the council, but always were of one mind, and advised the Argives with understanding and sound counsel, how all might be for the very best. But after we had sacked the steep city of Priam, and had departed in our ships, and a god had scattered the Achaeans, even then did Zeus devise in his heart a pitiful returning for the Argives, for in no wise were they all discreet or just. Wherefore many of them met with an ill faring by reason of the deadly wrath of the grey-eyed goddess, the daughter of the mighty sire, who set debate between the two sons of Atreus. And they twain called to the gathering of the host all the Achaeans, recklessly and out of order, against the going down of the sun; and lo, the sons of the Achaeans came heavy with wine. And the Atreidae spake out and told the reason wherefore they had assembled the host. Then verily Menelaus charged all the Achaeans to bethink them of returning over the broad back of the sea, but in no sort did he please Agamemnon, whose desire was to keep back the host and to offer holy hecatombs, that so he might appease that dread wrath of Athene. Fool! for he knew not this, that she was never to be won; for the mind of the everlasting gods is not lightly turned to repentance. So these twain stood bandying hard words; but the goodly-greaved Achaeans sprang up with a wondrous din and twofold counsels found favour among them. So that one night we rested, thinking hard things against each other, for Zeus was fashioning for us a ruinous doom. But in the morning, we of the one part drew our ships to the fair salt sea, and put our wealth aboard, and the low-girdled Trojan women. Now one half the people abode steadfastly there with Agamemnon, son of Atreus, shepherd of the host; and half of us embarked and drave to sea and swiftly the ship sailed, for a god made smooth the sea with the depths thereof. And when we came to Tenedos, we did sacrifice to the gods, being eager for the homeward way; but

Zeus did not yet purpose our returning, nay, hard was he, that roused once more an evil strife among us. Then some turned back their curved ships, and went their way, even the company of Odysseus, the wise and manifold in counsel, once again showing a favour to Agamemnon, son of Atreus. But I fled on with the squadron that followed me, for I knew how now the god imagined mischief. And the warlike son of Tydeus fled and roused his men thereto. And late in our track came Menelaus of the fair hair, who found us in Lesbos, considering about the long voyage, whether we should go sea-ward of craggy Chios, by the isle of Psyria, keeping the isle upon our left, or inside Chios past windy Mimas. So we asked the god to show us a sign, and a sign he declared to us, and bade us cleave a path across the middle sea to Euboea, that we might flee the swiftest way from sorrow. And a shrill wind arose and blew, and the ships ran most fleetly over the teeming ways, and in the night they touched at Geraestus. So there we sacrificed many thighs of bulls to Poseidon, for joy that we had measured out so great a stretch of sea. It was the fourth day when the company of Diomede son of Tydeus, tamer of horses, moored their gallant ships at Argos; but I held on for Pylos, and the breeze was never quenched from the hour that the god sent it forth to blow. Even so I came, dear child, without tidings, nor know I aught of those others, which of the Achaeans were saved and which were lost. But all that I hear tell of as I sit in our halls, thou shalt learn as it is meet, and I will hide nothing from thee. Safely, they say, came the Myrmidons the wild spearsmen, whom the famous son of high-souled Achilles led; and safely Philoctetes, the glorious son of Poias. And Idomeneus brought all his company to Crete, all that escaped the war, and from him the sea gat none. And of the son of Atreus even yourselves have heard, far apart though ye dwell, how he came, and how Aegisthus devised his evil end; but verily he himself paid a terrible reckoning. So good a thing it is that a son of the dead should still be left, even as that son also took vengeance on the slayer of his father, guileful Aegisthus, who slew his famous sire. And thou too, my friend, for I see thee very comely and tall, be valiant, that even men unborn may praise thee.'

And wise Telemachus answered him, and said: 'Nestor, son of Neleus, great glory of the Achaeans, verily and indeed he avenged himself, and the Achaeans shall noise his fame abroad, that even those may hear who are yet for to be. Oh that the gods would clothe me with such strength as his, that I might take vengeance on the wooers for their cruel transgression, who wantonly devise against me infatuate deeds! But the gods have woven for me the web of no such weal, for me or for my sire. But now I must in any wise endure it.'

Then Nestor of Gerenia, lord of chariots, made answer: 'Dear friend, seeing thou dost call these things to my remembrance and speak thereof, they tell me that many wooers for thy mother's hand plan mischief within the halls in thy despite. Say, dost thou willingly submit thee to oppression, or do the people through the land hate thee, obedient to the voice of a god? Who knows but that Odysseus may some day come and requite their violence, either himself alone or all the host of the Achaeans with him? Ah, if but grey-eyed Athene were inclined to love thee, as once she cared exceedingly for the renowned Odysseus in the land of the Trojans, where we Achaeans were sore afflicted,—for never yet have I seen the gods show forth such manifest love, as then did Pallas Athene standing manifest by him,—if she would be pleased so to love thee and to care for thee, then might certain of them clean forget their marriage.'

And wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'Old man, in no wise methinks shall this word be accomplished. This is a hard saying of thine, awe comes over me. Not for my hopes shall this thing come to pass, not even if the gods so willed it.'

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, spake to him again: 'Telemachus, what word hath escaped the door of thy lips? Lightly might a god, if so he would, bring a man safe home even from afar. Rather myself would I have travail and much pain ere I came home and saw the day of my returning, than come back and straightway perish on my own hearth-stone, even as Agamemnon perished by guile at the hands of his own wife and of Aegisthus. But lo you, death, which is common to all, the very gods cannot avert even from the man they love, when the ruinous doom shall bring him low of death that lays men at their length.'

And wise Telemachus answered her, saying: 'Mentor, no longer let us tell of these things, sorrowful though we be. There is none assurance any more of his returning, but already have the deathless gods devised for him death and black fate. But now I would question Nestor, and ask him of another matter, as one who above all men knows judgments and wisdom: for thrice, men say, he hath been king through the generations of men; yea, like an Immortal he seems to me to look upon. Nestor, son of Neleus, now tell me true: how died the son of Atreus, Agamemnon of the wide domain? Where was Menelaus? What death did crafty Aegisthus plan for him, in that he killed a man more valiant far than he? Or was Menelaus not in Argos of Achaia but wandering elsewhere among men, and that other took heart and slew Agamemnon?'

Then Nestor of Gerenia, lord of chariots, answered him: 'Yea now, my child, I will tell thee the whole truth. Verily thou guessest aright even of thyself how things would have fallen out, if Menelaus of the fair hair, the son of Atreus, when he came back from Troy, had found Aegisthus yet alive in the halls. Then even in his death would they not have heaped the piled earth over him, but dogs and fowls of the air would have devoured him as he lay on the plain far from the town. Nor would any of the Achaean women have bewailed him; so dread was the deed he contrived. Now we sat in leaguer there, achieving many adventures; but he the while in peace in the heart of Argos, the pastureland of horses, spake ofttimes, tempting her, to the wife of Agamemnon. Verily at the first she would none of the foul deed, the fair Clytemnestra, for she had a good understanding. Moreover there was with her a minstrel, whom the son of Atreus straitly charged as he went to Troy to have a care of his wife. But when at last the doom of the gods bound her to her ruin, then did Aegisthus carry the minstrel to a lonely isle, and left him there to be the prey and spoil of birds; while as for her, he led her to his house, a willing lover with a willing lady. And he burnt many thigh slices upon the holy altars of the gods, and hung up many offerings, woven-work and gold, seeing that he had accomplished a great deed, beyond all hope.

Now we, I say, were sailing together on our way from Troy, the son of Atreus and I, as loving friends. But when we had reached holy Sunium, the headland of Athens, there Phoebus Apollo slew the pilot of Menelaus with the visitation of his gentle shafts, as he held between his hands the rudder of the running ship, even Phrontis, son of Onetor, who excelled the tribes of men in piloting a ship, whenso the storm-winds were hurrying by. Thus was Menelaus holden there, though eager for the way, till he might bury his friend and pay the last rites over him. But when he in his turn, faring over the wine-dark sea in hollow ships, reached in swift course the steep mount of Malea, then it was that Zeus of the far-borne voice devised a hateful path, and shed upon them the breath of the shrill winds, and great swelling waves arose like unto mountains. There sundered he the fleet in twain, and part thereof he brought nigh to Crete, where the Cydonians dwelt about the streams of Iardanus. Now there is a certain cliff, smooth and sheer towards the sea, on the border of Gortyn, in the misty deep, where the South-West Wind drives a great wave against the left headland, towards Phaestus, and a little rock keeps back the mighty water. Thither came one part of the fleet, and the men scarce escaped destruction, but the ships were broken by the waves against the rock; while those other five dark-prowed ships the wind and the water bare and brought nigh to Egypt. Thus Menelaus, gathering much livelihood and gold, was wandering there with his ships among men of strange speech, and even then Aegisthus planned that pitiful work at home. And for seven years he ruled over Mycenae, rich in gold, after he slew the son of Atreus, and the people were subdued unto him. But in the eighth year came upon him goodly Orestes back from Athens to be his bane, and slew the slayer of his father, guileful Aegisthus, who killed his famous sire. Now when he had slain him, he made a funeral feast to the Argives over his hateful mother, and over the craven Aegisthus. And on the selfsame day there came to him Menelaus of the loud war-cry, bringing much treasure, even all the freight of his ships. So thou, my friend, wander not long far away from home, leaving thy substance behind thee and men in thy house so wanton, lest they divide and utterly devour all thy wealth, and thou shalt have gone on a vain journey. Rather I bid and command thee to go to Menelaus, for he hath lately come from a strange country, from the land of men whence none would hope in his heart to return, whom once the storms have driven wandering into so wide a sea. Thence not even the birds can make their way in the space of one year, so great a sea it is and terrible. But go now with thy ship and with thy company, or if thou hast a mind to fare by land, I have a chariot and horses at thy service, yea and my sons to do thy will, who will be thy guides to goodly Lacedaemon, where is Menelaus of the fair hair. Do thou thyself entreat him, that he may give thee unerring answer. He will not lie to thee, for he is very wise.'

Thus he spake, and the sun went down and darkness came on. Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, spake among them, saying: 'Yea, old man, thou hast told all this thy tale aright. But come, cut up the tongues of the victims and mix the wine, that we may pour forth before Poseidon and the other deathless gods, and so may bethink us of sleep for it is the hour for sleep. For already has the light gone beneath the west, and it is not seemly to sit long at a banquet of the gods, but to be going home.'

So spake the daughter of Zeus, and they hearkened to her voice. And the henchmen poured water over their hands and pages crowned the mixing bowls with drink, and served out the wine to all, after they had first poured for libation into each cup in turn; and they cast the tongues upon the fire, and stood up and poured the drink-offering thereon. But when they had poured forth and had drunken to their heart's content, Athene and godlike Telemachus were both set on returning to the hollow ship; but Nestor would have stayed them, and accosted them, saying: 'Zeus forfend it, and all the other deathless gods, that ye should depart from my house to the swift ship, as from the dwelling of one that is utterly without raiment or a needy man, who hath not rugs or blankets many in his house whereon to sleep softly, he or his guests. Nay not so, I have rugs and fair blankets by me. Never, methinks, shall the dear son of this man, even of Odysseus, lay him down upon the ship's deck, while as yet I am alive, and my children after me are left in my hall to entertain strangers, whoso may chance to come to my house.'

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, spake to him again: 'Yea, herein hast thou spoken aright, dear father: and Telemachus may well obey thee, for before all things this is meet. Behold, he shall now depart with thee, that he may sleep in thy halls; as for me I will go to the black ship, that I may cheer my company and tell them all. For I avow me to be the one elder among them; those others are but younger men, who follow for love of him, all of them of like age with the high-souled Telemachus. There will I lay me down by the black hollow ship this night; but in the morning I will go to the Cauconians high of heart, where somewhat of mine is owing to me, no small debt nor of yesterday. But do thou send this man upon his way with thy chariot and thy son, since he hath come to thy house, and give him horses the lightest of foot and chief in strength.'

Therewith grey-eyed Athene departed in the semblance of a sea-eagle; and amazement fell on all that saw it, and the old man he marvelled when his eyes beheld it. And he took the hand of Telemachus and spake and hailed him:

'My friend, methinks that thou wilt in no sort be a coward and a weakling, if indeed in thy youth the gods thus follow with thee to be thy guides. For truly this is none other of those who keep the mansions of Olympus, save only the daughter of Zeus, the driver of the spoil, the maiden Trito-born [water-born], she that honoured thy good father too among the Argives. Nay be gracious, queen, and vouchsafe a goodly fame to me, even to me and to my sons and to my wife revered. And I in turn will sacrifice to thee a yearling heifer, broad of brow, unbroken, which man never yet hath led beneath the yoke. Such an one will I offer to thee, and gild her horns with gold.'

'Even so he spake in prayer, and Pallas Athene heard him. Then Nestor of Gerenia, lord of chariots, led them, even his sons and the husbands of his daughters, to his own fair house. But when they had reached this prince's famous halls, they sat down all orderly on seats and high chairs; and when they were come, the old man mixed well for them a bowl of sweet wine, which now in the eleventh year from the vintaging the housewife opened, and unloosed the string that fastened the lid. The old man let mix a bowl thereof, and prayed instantly to Athene as he poured forth before her, even to the daughter of Zeus, lord of the aegis.

But after they had poured forth and had drunken to their heart's content, these went each one to his own house to lie down to rest. But Nestor of Gerenia, lord of chariots, would needs have Telemachus, son of divine Odysseus, to sleep there on a jointed bedstead beneath the echoing corridor, and by him Peisistratus of the good ashen spear, leader of men, who alone of his sons was yet unwed in his halls. As for him he slept within the inmost chamber of the lofty house, and the lady his wife arrayed for him bedstead and bedding.

So soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, Nestor of Gerenia, lord of chariots, gat him up from his bed, and he went forth and sat him down upon the smooth stones, which were before his lofty doors, all polished, white and glistening, whereon Neleus sat of old, in counsel the peer of the gods. Howbeit, stricken by fate, he had ere now gone down to the house of Hades, and to-day Nestor of Gerenia in his turn sat thereon, warder of the Achaeans, with his staff in his hands. And about him his sons were gathered and come together, issuing from their chambers, Echephron and Stratius, and Perseus and Aretus and the godlike Thrasymedes. And sixth and last came the hero Peisistratus. And they led godlike Telemachus and set him by their side, and Nestor of Gerenia, lord of chariots, spake first among them:

'Quickly, my dear children, accomplish my desire, that first of all the gods I may propitiate Athene, who came to me in visible presence to the rich feast of the god. Nay then, let one go to the plain for a heifer, that she may come as soon as may be, and that the neat-herd may drive her: and let another go to the black ship of high-souled Telemachus to bring all his company, and let him leave two men only. And let one again bid Laerces the goldsmith to come hither that he may gild the horns of the heifer. And ye others, abide ye here together and speak to the handmaids within that they make ready a banquet through our famous halls, and fetch seats and logs to set about the altar, and bring clear water.'

Thus he spake and lo, they all hastened to the work. The heifer she came from the field, and from the swift gallant ship came the company of great-hearted Telemachus: the smith came holding in his hands his tools, the instruments of his craft, anvil and hammer and well-made pincers, wherewith he wrought the gold; Athene too came to receive her sacrifice. And the old knight Nestor gave gold, and the other fashioned it skilfully, and gilded therewith the horns of the heifer, that the goddess might be glad at the sight of her fair offering. And Stratius and goodly Echephron led the heifer by the horns. And Aretus came forth from the chamber bearing water for the washing of hands in a basin of flowered work, and in the other hand he held the barley-meal in a basket; and Thrasymedes, steadfast in the battle, stood by holding in his hand a sharp axe, ready to smite the heifer. And Perseus held the dish for the blood, and the old man Nestor, driver of chariots, performed the first rite of the washing of hands and the sprinkling of the meal, and he prayed instantly to Athene as he began the rite, casting into the fire the lock from the head of the victim.

Now when they had prayed and tossed the sprinkled grain, straightway the son of Nestor, gallant Thrasymedes, stood by and struck the blow; and the axe severed the tendons of the neck and loosened the might of the heifer; and the women raised their cry, the daughters and the sons' wives and the wife revered of Nestor, Eurydice, eldest of the daughters of Clymenus. And now they lifted the victim's head from the wide-wayed earth, and held it so, while Peisistratus, leader of men, cut the throat. And after the black blood had gushed forth and the life had left the bones, quickly they broke up the body, and anon cut slices from the thighs all duly, and wrapt the same in the fat, folding them double, and laid raw flesh thereon. So that old man burnt them on the cleft wood, and poured over them the red wine, and by his side the young men held in their hands the five-pronged forks. Now after that the thighs were quite consumed and they had tasted the inner parts, they cut the rest up small and spitted and roasted it, holding the sharp spits in their hands.

Meanwhile she bathed Telemachus, even fair Polycaste, the youngest daughter of Nestor, son of Neleus. And after she had bathed him and anointed him with olive oil, and cast about him a goodly mantle and a doublet, he came forth from the bath in fashion like the deathless gods. So he went and sat him down by Nestor, shepherd of the people.

Now when they had roasted the outer flesh, and drawn it off the spits, they sat down and fell to feasting, and honourable men waited on them, pouring wine into the golden cups. But when they had put from them the desire of meat and drink, Nestor of Gerenia, lord of chariots, first spake among them:

‘Lo now, my sons, yoke for Telemachus horses with flowing mane and lead them beneath the car, that he may get forward on his way.’

Even so he spake, and they gave good heed and hearkened; and quickly they yoked the swift horses beneath the chariot. And the dame that kept the stores placed therein corn and wine and dainties, such as princes eat, the fosterlings of Zeus. So Telemachus stept up into the goodly car, and with him Peisistratus son of Nestor, leader of men, likewise climbed the car and grasped the reins in his hands, and he touched the horses with the whip to start them, and nothing loth the pair flew toward the plain, and left the steep citadel of Pylos. So all day long they swayed the yoke they bore upon their necks.

Now the sun sank and all the ways were darkened. And they came to Pherae, to the house of Diocles, son of Orsilochus, the child begotten of Alpheus. There they rested for the night, and by them he set the entertainment of strangers.

Now so soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, they yoked the horses and mounted the inlaid car. And forth they drave from the gateway and the echoing corridor, and Peisistratus touched the horses with the whip to start them, and the pair flew onward nothing loth. So they came to the wheat-bearing plain, and thenceforth they pressed toward the end: in such wise did the swift horses speed forward. Now the sun sank and all the ways were darkened.

BOOK IV

Telemachus's entertainment at Sparta, where Menelaus tells him what befell many of the Greeks on their return; that Odysseus was with Calypso in the isle Ogygia, as he was told by Proteus.

And they came to Lacedaemon lying low among the caverned hills, and drave to the dwelling of renowned Menelaus. Him they found giving a feast in his house to many friends of his kin, a feast for the wedding of his noble son and daughter. His daughter he was sending to the son of Achilles, cleaver of the ranks of men, for in Troy he first had promised and covenanted to give her, and now the gods were bringing about their marriage. So now he was speeding her on her way with chariot and horses, to the famous city of the Myrmidons, among whom her lord bare rule. And for his son he was bringing to his home the daughter of Alector out of Sparta, for his well-beloved son, strong Megapenthes [son of sorrow], born of a slave woman, for the gods no more showed promise of seed to Helen, from the day that she bare a lovely child, Hermione, as fair as golden Aphrodite. So they were feasting through the great vaulted hall, the neighbours and the kinsmen of renowned Menelaus, making merry; and among them a divine minstrel was singing to the lyre, and as he began the song two tumblers in the company whirled through the midst of them.

Meanwhile those twain, the hero Telemachus and the splendid son of Nestor, made halt at the entry of the gate, they and their horses. And the lord Eteoneus came forth and saw them, the ready squire of renowned Menelaus; and he went through the palace to bear the tidings to the shepherd of the people, and standing near spake to him winged words:

'Menelaus, fosterling of Zeus, here are two strangers, whosoever they be, two men like to the lineage of great Zeus. Say, shall we loose their swift horses from under the yoke, or send them onward to some other host who shall receive them kindly?

Then in sore displeasure spake to him Menelaus of the fair hair: 'Eteoneus son of Boethous, truly thou wert not a fool aforetime, but now for this once, like a child thou talkest folly. Surely ourselves ate much hospitable cheer of other men, ere we twain came hither, even if in time to come Zeus haply give us rest from affliction. Nay go, unyoke the horses of the strangers, and as for the men, lead them forward to the house to feast with us.'

So spake he, and Eteoneus hasted from the hall and called the other ready squires to follow with him. So they loosed the sweating horses from beneath the yoke, and fastened them at the stalls of the horses, and threw beside them spelt, and therewith mixed white barley, and tilted the chariot against the shining faces of the gateway, and led the men into the hall divine. And they beheld and marvelled as they gazed throughout the palace of the king, the fosterling of Zeus; for there was a gleam as it were of sun or moon through the lofty palace of renowned Menelaus. But after they had gazed their fill, they went to the polished baths and bathed them. Now when the maidens had bathed them and anointed them with olive oil, and cast about them thick cloaks and doublets, they sat on chairs by Menelaus, son of Atreus. And a handmaid bare water for the hands in a goodly golden ewer, and poured it forth over a silver basin to wash withal; and to their side she drew a polished table, and a grave dame bare food and set it by them, and laid upon the board many dainties, giving freely of such things as she had by her, and a carver lifted and placed by them platters of divers kinds of flesh, and nigh them he set golden bowls. So Menelaus of the fair hair greeted the twain and spake:

'Taste ye food and be glad, and thereafter when ye have supped, we will ask what men ye are; for the blood of your parents is not lost in you, but ye are of the line of men that are sceptered kings, the fosterlings of Zeus; for no churls could beget sons like you.'

So spake he, and took and set before them the fat ox-chine roasted, which they had given him as his own mess by way of honour. And they stretched forth their hands upon the good cheer set before them. Now when they had put from them the desire of meat and drink Telemachus spake to the son of Nestor, holding his head close to him, that those others might not hear:

‘Son of Nestor, delight of my heart, mark the flashing of bronze through the echoing halls, and the flashing of gold and of amber and of silver and of ivory. Such like, methinks, is the court of Olympian Zeus within, for the world of things that are here; wonder comes over me as I look thereon.’

And as he spake Menelaus of the fair hair was ware of him, and uttering his voice spake to them winged words:

‘Children dear, of a truth no one of mortal men may contend with Zeus, for his mansions and his treasures are everlasting: but of men there may be who will vie with me in treasure, or there may be none. Yea, for after many a woe and wanderings manifold, I brought my wealth home in ships, and in the eighth year came hither. I roamed over Cyprus and Phoenicia and Egypt, and reached the Aethiopians and Sidonians and Erembi and Libya, where lambs are horned from the birth. For there the ewes yean thrice with in the full circle of a year; there neither lord nor shepherd lacketh aught of cheese or flesh or of sweet milk, but ever the flocks yield store of milk continual. While I was yet roaming in those lands, gathering much livelihood, meantime another slew my brother privily, at unawares, by the guile of his accursed wife. Thus, look you, I have no joy of my lordship among these my possessions: and ye are like to have heard hereof from your fathers, whosoever they be, for I have suffered much and let a house go to ruin that was stablished fair, and had in it much choice substance. I would that I had but a third part of those my riches, and dwelt in my halls, and that those men were yet safe, who perished of old in the wide land of Troy, far from Argos, the pastureland of horses. Howbeit, though I bewail them all and sorrow oftentimes as I sit in our halls,—awhile indeed I satisfy my soul with lamentation, and then again I cease; for soon hath man enough of chill lamentation—yet for them all I make no such dole, despite my grief, as for one only, who causes me to loathe both sleep and meat, when I think upon him. For no one of the Achaeans toiled so greatly as Odysseus toiled and adventured himself; but to him it was to be but labour and trouble, and to me grief ever comfortless for his sake, so long he is afar, nor know we aught, whether he be alive or dead. Yea methinks they lament him, even that old

Laertes and the constant Penelope and Telemachus, whom he left a child newborn in his house.'

So spake he, and in the heart of Telemachus he stirred a yearning to lament his father; and at his father's name he let a tear fall from his eyelids to the ground, and held up his purple mantle with both his hands before his eyes. And Menelaus marked him and mused in his mind and his heart whether he should leave him to speak of his father, or first question him and prove him in every word.

While yet he pondered these things in his mind and in his heart, Helen came forth from her fragrant vaulted chamber, like Artemis of the golden arrows; and with her came Adrastê and set for her the well-wrought chair, and Alcippê bare a rug of soft wool, and Phylo bare a silver basket which Alcandrê gave her, the wife of Polybus, who dwelt in Thebes of Egypt, where is the chiefest store of wealth in the houses. He gave two silver baths to Menelaus, and tripods twain, and ten talents of gold. And besides all this, his wife bestowed on Helen lovely gifts; a golden distaff did she give, and a silver basket with wheels beneath, and the rims thereof were finished with gold. This it was that the handmaid Phylo bare and set beside her, filled with dressed yarn, and across it was laid a distaff charged with wool of violet blue. So Helen sat her down in the chair, and beneath was a footstool for her feet. And anon she spake to her lord and questioned him of each thing.

'Menelaus, fosterling of Zeus, know we now who these men avow themselves to be, that have come under our roof? Shall I dissemble or shall I speak the truth? Nay, I am minded to tell it. None, I say, have I ever yet seen so like another, man nor woman—wonder comes over me as I look on him—as this man is like the son of great-hearted Odysseus, Telemachus, whom he left a new-born child in his house, when for the sake of me, shameless woman that I was, ye Achaeans came up under Troy with bold war in your hearts.'

And Menelaus of the fair hair answered her, saying: 'Now I too, lady, mark the likeness even as thou tracest it. For such as these were his feet, such his hands, and the glances of his eyes, and his head, and his hair withal. Yea, and even now

I was speaking of Odysseus, as I remembered him, of all his woeful travail for my sake; when, lo, he let fall a bitter tear beneath his brows, and held his purple cloak up before his eyes.'

And Peisistratus, son of Nestor, answered him, saying: 'Menelaus, son of Atreus, fostering of Zeus, leader of the host, assuredly this is the son of that very man, even as thou sayest. But he is of a sober wit, and thinketh it shame in his heart as on this his first coming to make show of presumptuous words in the presence of thee, in whose voice we twain delight as in the voice of a god. Now Nestor of Gerenia, lord of chariots, sent me forth to be his guide on the way: for he desired to see thee that thou mightest put into his heart some word or work. For a son hath many griefs in his halls when his father is away, if perchance he hath none to stand by him. Even so it is now with Telemachus; his father is away, nor hath he others in the township to defend him from distress.'

And Menelaus of the fair hair answered him, and said: 'Lo now, in good truth there has come unto my house the son of a friend indeed, who for my sake endured many adventures. And I thought to welcome him on his coming more nobly than all the other Argives, if but Olympian Zeus, of the far-borne voice, had vouchsafed us a return over the sea in our swift ships,—that such a thing should be. And in Argos I would have given him a city to dwell in, and stablished for him a house, and brought him forth from Ithaca with his substance and his son and all his people, making one city desolate of those that lie around, and are in mine own domain. Then ofttimes would we have held converse here, and nought would have parted us, the welcoming and the welcomed, ere the black cloud of death overshadowed us. Howsoever, the god himself, methinks, must have been jealous hereof, who from that hapless man alone cut off his returning.'

So spake he, and in the hearts of all he stirred the desire of lamentation. She wept, even Argive Helen the daughter of Zeus, and Telemachus wept, and Menelaus the son of Atreus; nay, nor did the son of Nestor keep tearless eyes. For he bethought him in his heart of noble Antilochus, whom the glorious son of the bright Dawn had slain. Thinking upon him he spake winged words:

'Son of Atreus, the ancient Nestor in his own halls was ever wont to say that thou wert wise beyond man's wisdom, whensoever we made mention of thee and asked one another concerning thee. And now, if it be possible, be persuaded by me, who for one have no pleasure in weeping at supper time—the new-born day will right soon be upon us. Not indeed that I deem it blame at all to weep for any mortal who hath died and met his fate. Lo, this is now the only due we pay to miserable men, to cut the hair and let the tear fall from the cheek. For I too have a brother dead, nowise the meanest of the Argives, and thou art like to have known him, for as for me I never encountered him, never beheld him. But men say that Antilochus outdid all, being excellent in speed of foot and in the fight.'

And Menelaus of the fair hair answered him, and said: 'My friend, lo, thou hast said all that a wise man might say or do, yea, and an elder than thou;—for from such a sire too thou art sprung, wherefore thou dost even speak wisely. Right easily known is that man's seed, for whom Cronion weaves the skein of luck at bridal and at birth: even as now hath he granted prosperity to Nestor for ever for all his days, that he himself should grow into a smooth old age in his halls, and his sons moreover should be wise and the best of spearsmen. But we will cease now the weeping which was erewhile made, and let us once more bethink us of our supper, and let them pour water over our hands. And again in the morning there will be tales for Telemachus and me to tell one to the other, even to the end.'

So spake he, and Asphalion poured water over their hands, the ready squire of renowned Menelaus. And they put forth their hands upon the good cheer spread before them.

Then Helen, daughter of Zeus, turned to new thoughts. Presently she cast a drug into the wine whereof they drank, a drug to lull all pain and anger, and bring forgetfulness of every sorrow. Whoso should drink a draught thereof, when it is mingled in the bowl, on that day he would let no tear fall down his cheeks, not though his mother and his father died, not though men slew his brother or dear son with the sword before his face, and his own eyes beheld it. Medicines of such virtue and so helpful had the daughter of Zeus, which Polydamna, the wife of Thon, had given her, a woman of Egypt, where earth the grain-giver yields herbs in greatest plenty, many that are healing in the cup, and many baneful. There each man is a leech skilled beyond all human kind; yea, for they are of the race of Paeëon. Now after she had cast in the drug and bidden pour forth of the wine, she made answer once again, and spake unto her lord:

'Son of Atreus, Menelaus, fosterling of Zeus, and lo, ye sons of noble men, forasmuch as now to one and now to another Zeus gives good and evil, for to him all things are possible,—now, verily, sit ye down and feast in the halls, and take ye joy in the telling of tales, and I will tell you one that fits the time. Now all of them I could not tell or number, so many as were the adventures of Odysseus of the hardy heart, save only what a deed was this he wrought and dared in his hardiness in the land of the Trojans, where ye Achaeans suffered affliction. He subdued his body with unseemly stripes, and a sorry covering he cast about his shoulders, and in the fashion of a servant he went down into the wide-wayed city of the foemen, and he hid himself in the guise of another, a beggar, though in no wise such an one was he at the ships of the Achaeans. In this semblance he passed into the city of the Trojans, and they wist not who he was, and I alone knew him in that guise, and I kept questioning him, but in his subtlety he avoided me. But when at last I was about washing him and anointing him with olive oil, and had put on him raiment, and sworn a great oath not to reveal Odysseus amid the Trojans, ere he reached the swift ships and the huts, even then he told me all the purpose of the Achaeans. And after slaying many of the Trojans with the long sword, he returned to the Argives and brought back word again of all. Then the other Trojan women wept aloud, but my soul was glad, for already my heart was turned to go back again even to my home: and now at the last I groaned for the blindness that Aphrodite gave me, when she led me thither away from mine own country, forsaking my child and my bridal chamber and my lord, that lacked not aught whether for wisdom or yet for beauty.'

And Menelaus of the fair hair answered her, saying:

'Verily all this tale, lady, thou has duly told. Ere now have I learned the counsel and the thought of many heroes, and travelled over many a land, but never yet have mine eyes beheld any such man of heart as was Odysseus; such another deed as he wrought and dared in his hardiness even in the shapen horse, wherein sat all we chiefs of the Argives, bearing to the Trojans death and doom. Anon thou camest thither, and sure some god must have bidden thee, who wished to bring glory to the Trojans. Yea and godlike Deiphobus went with thee on thy way. Thrice thou didst go round about the hollow ambush and handle it, calling aloud on the chiefs of the Argives by name, and making thy voice like the voices of the wives of all the Argives. Now I and the son of Tydeus and goodly Odysseus sat in the midst and heard thy call; and verily we twain had a desire to start up and come forth or presently to answer from within; but Odysseus stayed and held us there, despite our eagerness. Then all the other sons of the Achaeans held their peace, but Anticlus alone was still minded to answer thee. Howbeit Odysseus firmly closed his mouth with strong hands, and so saved all the Achaeans, and held him until such time as Pallas Athene led thee back.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, and said: 'Menelaus, son of Atreus, fosterling of Zeus, leader of the host, all the more grievous it is! for in no way did this courage ward from him pitiful destruction, not though his heart within him had been very iron. But come, bid us to bed, that forthwith we may take our joy of rest beneath the spell of sleep.'

So spake he, and Argive Helen bade her handmaids set out bedsteads beneath the corridor, and fling on them fair purple blankets and spread coverlets above, and thereon lay thick mantles to be a clothing over all. So they went from the hall with torch in hand, and spread the beds, and the henchman led forth the guests. Thus they slept there in the outer gallery of the house, the hero Telemachus and the splendid son of Nestor. But the son of Atreus slept, as his custom was, in the inmost chamber of the lofty house, and by him lay long-robed Helen, that fair lady.

Soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, Menelaus of the loud war-shout gat him up from his bed and put on his raiment, and cast his sharp sword about his shoulder, and beneath his smooth feet bound his goodly sandals, and stept forth from his chamber, in presence like a god, and sat by Telemachus, and spake and hailed him:

'To what end hath thy need brought thee hither, hero Telemachus, unto fair Lacedaemon, over the broad back of the sea? Is it a matter of the common weal or of thine own? Herein tell me the plain truth.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, and said: 'Menelaus, son of Atreus, fosterling of Zeus, leader of the host, I have come if perchance thou mayest tell me some tidings of my father. My dwelling is being devoured and my fat lands are ruined, and of unfriendly men my house is full,—who slaughter continually my thronging flocks, and my kine with trailing feet and shambling gait,—none other than the wooers of my mother, despiteful out of measure. So now am I come hither to thy knees, if haply thou art willing to tell me of his pitiful death, as one that saw it perchance with thine own eyes, or heard the story from some other wanderer; for his mother bare him to exceeding sorrow. And speak me no soft words in ruth or pity, but tell me plainly how thou didst get sight of him. Ah, I pray thee, if ever at all my father, good Odysseus, made promise to thee of word or work and fulfilled the same in the land of the Trojans, where ye Achaeans suffered affliction, these things, I pray thee, now remember and tell me truth.'

Then in heavy displeasure spake to him Menelaus of the fair hair: 'Out upon them, for truly in the bed of a brave-hearted man were they minded to lie, very cravens as they are! Even as when a hind hath couched her newborn fawns unweaned in a strong lion's lair, and searcheth out the mountain-knees and grassy hollows, seeking pasture, and afterward the lion cometh back to his bed, and sendeth forth unsightly death upon that pair, even so shall Odysseus send forth unsightly death upon the wooers. Would to our father Zeus and Athene and Apollo, would that in such might as when of old in stablished Lesbos he rose up and wrestled a match with Philomeleides and threw him mightily, and all the Achaeans rejoiced; would that in such strength Odysseus might consort with the wooers: then should they all have swift fate, and bitter wedlock! But for that whereof thou askest and entreatest me, be sure I will not swerve from the truth in aught that I say, nor deceive thee; but of all that the ancient one of the sea, whose speech is sooth, declared to me, not a word will I hide or keep from thee.

'In the river Aegyptus [Nile], though eager I was to press onward home, the gods they stayed me, for that I had not offered them the acceptable sacrifice of hecatombs, and the gods ever desired that men should be mindful of their commandments. Now there is an island in the wash of the waves over against Aegyptus, and men call it Pharos, within one day's voyage of a hollow ship, when shrill winds blow fair in her wake. And therein is a good haven, whence men launch the gallant ships into the deep when they have drawn a store of deep black water. There the gods held me twenty days, nor did the sea-winds ever show their breath, they that serve to waft ships over the broad back of the sea. And now would all our corn have been spent, and likewise the strength of the men, except some goddess had taken pity on me and saved me, Eidothëe, daughter of mighty Proteus, the ancient one of the sea. For most of all I moved her heart, when she met me wandering alone apart from my company, who were ever roaming round the isle, fishing with bent hooks, for hunger was gnawing at their belly. So she stood by, and spake and uttered her voice, saying:

'"Art thou so very foolish, stranger, and feeble-witted, or art thou wilfully remiss, and hast pleasure in suffering? So long time art thou holden in the isle and canst find no issue therefrom, while the heart of thy company faileth within them?"

'Even so she spake, and I answered her saying: "I will speak forth, what goddess soever thou art, and tell thee that in no wise am I holden here by mine own will, but it needs must be that I have sinned against the deathless gods, who keep the wide heaven. Howbeit, do thou tell me—for the gods know all things—which of the immortals it is that binds me here and hath hindered me from my way, and declare as touching my returning how I may go over the teeming deep."

'So I spake, and straightway the fair goddess made answer: "Yea now, sir, I will plainly tell thee all. Hither resorteth that ancient one of the sea, whose speech is sooth, the deathless Egyptian Proteus, who knows the depths of every sea, and is the thrall of Poseidon, and who, they say, is my father that begat me. If thou couldst but lay an ambush and catch him, he will surely declare to thee the way and the measure of thy path, and will tell thee of thy returning, how thou mayest go over the teeming deep. Yea, and he will show thee, O fosterling of Zeus, if thou wilt, what good thing and what evil hath been wrought in thy halls, whilst thou hast been faring this long and grievous way."

'So she spake, but I answered and said unto her: "Devise now thyself the ambush to take this ancient one divine, lest by any chance he see me first, or know of my coming, and avoid me. For a god is hard for mortal man to quell."

'So spake I, and straightway the fair goddess made answer "Yea now, sir, I will plainly tell thee all. So often as the sun in his course hath reached the mid heaven, then forth from the brine comes the ancient one of the sea, whose speech is sooth, before the breath of the West Wind he comes, and the sea's dark ripple covers him. And when he is got forth, he lies down to sleep in the hollow of the caves. And around him the seals, the brood of the fair daughter of the brine, sleep all in a flock, stolen forth from the grey sea water, and bitter is the scent they breathe of the deeps of the salt sea. There will I lead thee at the breaking of the day, and couch you all orderly; so do thou choose diligently three of thy company, the best thou hast in thy decked ships. And I will tell thee all the magic arts of that old man. First, he will number the seals and go over them; but when he has told their tale and beheld them, he will lay him down in the midst, as a shepherd mid the sheep of his flock. So soon as ever ye shall see him couched, even then mind you of your might and strength, and hold him there, despite his eagerness and striving to be free. And he will make assay, and take all manner of shapes of things that creep upon the earth, of water likewise, and of fierce fire burning. But do ye grasp him steadfastly and press him yet the more, and at length when he questions thee in his proper shape, as he was when first ye saw him laid to rest, then, hero, hold thy strong hands, and let the ancient one go free, and ask him which of the gods is hard upon thee, and as touching thy returning, how thou mayest go over the teeming deep."

'Therewith she dived beneath the heaving sea, but I betook me to the ships where they stood in the sand, and my heart was darkly troubled as I went. But after I had come down to the ship and to the sea, and we had made ready our supper and immortal night had come on, then did we lay us to rest upon the sea-beach. So soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, in that hour I walked by the shore of the wide-wayed sea, praying instantly to the gods; and I took with me three of my company, in whom I trusted most for every enterprise.

'Meanwhile, so it was that she had plunged into the broad bosom of the sea, and had brought from the deep the skins of four sea-calves, and all were newly flayed, for she was minded to lay a snare for her father. She scooped lairs on the sea-sand, and sat awaiting us, and we drew very nigh her, and she made us all lie down in order, and cast a skin over each. There would our ambush have been most terrible, for the deadly stench of the sea-bred seals distressed us sore: nay, who would lay him down by a beast of the sea? But herself she wrought deliverance, and devised a great comfort. She took ambrosia of a very sweet savour, and set it beneath each man's nostril, and did away with the stench of the beast. So all the morning we waited with steadfast heart, and the seals came forth in troops from the brine, and then they couched them all orderly by the sea-beach. And at high day the ancient one came forth from out of the brine, and found his fatted seals, yea and he went along their line and told their tale; and first among the sea beasts he reckoned us, and guessed not that there was guile, and afterward he too laid him down. Then we rushed upon him with a cry, and cast our hands about him, nor did that ancient one forget his cunning. Now behold, at the first he turned into a bearded lion, and thereafter into a snake, and a pard, and a huge boar; then he took the shape of running water, and of a tall and flowering tree. We the while held him close with steadfast heart. But when now that ancient one of the magic arts was aweary, then at last he questioned me and spake unto me, saying:

' "Which of the gods was it, son of Atreus, that aided thee with his counsel, that thou mightest waylay and take me perforce? What wouldest thou thereby?"

' Even so he spake, but I answered him saying: "Old man, thou knowest all, wherefore dost thou question me thereof with crooked words? For lo, I am holden long time in this isle, neither can I find any issue therefrom, and my heart faileth within me. Howbeit do thou tell me—for the gods know all things—which of the immortals it is that bindeth me here, and hath hindered me from my way; and declare as touching my returning, how I may go over the teeming deep."

' Even so I spake, and he straightway answered me saying: "Nay, surely thou shouldest have done goodly sacrifice to Zeus and the other gods ere thine embarking, that with most speed thou mightest reach thy country, sailing over the wine-dark deep. For it is not thy fate to see thy friends, and come to thy stablished house and thine own country, till thou hast passed yet again within the waters of Aegyptus, the heaven-fed stream, and offered holy hecatombs to the deathless gods who keep the wide heaven. So shall the gods grant thee the path which thou desirest."

' So spake he, but my spirit within me was broken, for that he bade me again to go to Aegyptus over the misty deep, a long and grievous way.

' Yet even so I answered him saying: "Old man, all this will I do, according to thy word. But come, declare me this, and tell it all plainly. Did all those Achaeans return safe with their ships, all whom Nestor and I left as we went from Troy, or perished any by a shameful death aboard his own ship, or in the arms of his friends, after he had wound up the clew of war?"

' So spake I, and anon he answered me saying: "Son of Atreus, why dost thou straitly question me hereof? Nay, it is not for thy good to know or learn my thought; for I tell thee thou shalt not long be tearless, when thou hast heard it all aright. For many of these were taken, and many were left; but two only of the leaders of the mail-coated Achaeans perished in returning; as for the battle, thou thyself wast there. And one methinks is yet alive, and is holden on the wide deep. Aias in truth was smitten in the midst of his ships of the long oars. Poseidon at first brought him nigh to Gyrae, to the mighty rocks, and delivered him from the sea. And so would he have fled his doom, albeit hated by Athene, had he not let a proud word fall in the fatal darkening of his heart. He said that in the gods' despite he had escaped the great gulf of the sea; and Poseidon heard his loud boasting, and presently caught up his trident into his strong hands, and smote the rock Gyraean and cleft it in twain. And the one part abode in his place, but the other fell into the sea, the broken piece whereon Aias sat at the first, when his heart was darkened. And the rock bore him down into the vast and heaving deep; so there he perished when he had drunk of the salt sea water. But thy brother verily escaped the fates and avoided them in his hollow ships, for queen Hera saved him. But now when he was like soon to reach the steep mount of Malea, lo, the storm wind snatched him away and bore him over the teeming deep, making great moan, to the border of the country where of old Thyestes dwelt, but now Aegisthus abode there, the son of Thyestes. But when thence too there showed a good prospect of safe returning, and the gods changed the wind to a fair gale, and they had reached home, then verily did Agamemnon set foot with joy upon his country's soil, and as he touched his own land he kissed it, and many were the hot tears he let fall, for he saw his land and was glad. And it was so that the watchman spied him from his tower, the watchman whom crafty Aegisthus had led and posted there, promising him for a reward two talents of gold. Now he kept watch for the space of a year, lest Agamemnon should pass by him when he looked not, and mind him of his wild prowess. So he went to the house to bear the tidings to the shepherd of the people. And straightway Aegisthus contrived a cunning treason. He chose out twenty of the best men in the township, and set an ambush, and on the further side of the hall he commanded to prepare a feast. Then with chariot and horses he went to bid to the feast Agamemnon, shepherd of the people; but caitiff thoughts were in his heart. He brought him up to his house, all unwitting of his doom, and when he had feasted him slew him, as one slayeth an ox at the stall. And none of the company of Atreides that were of his following were left, nor any of the men of Aegisthus, but they were all killed in the halls."

'So spake he, and my spirit within me was broken, and I wept as I sat upon the sand, nor was I minded any more to live and to see the light of the sun. But when I had taken my fill of weeping and grovelling on the ground, then spake the ancient one of the sea, whose speech is sooth:

'"No more, son of Atreus, hold this long weeping without cease, for we shall find no help therein. Rather with all haste make essay that so thou mayest come to thine own country. For either thou shalt find Aegisthus yet alive, or it may be Orestes was beforehand with thee and slew him; so mayest thou chance upon his funeral feast."

'So he spake, and my heart and lordly soul again were comforted for all my sorrow, and I uttered my voice and I spake to him winged words:

'"Their fate I now know; but tell me of the third; who is it that is yet living and holden on the wide deep, or perchance is dead? and fain would I hear despite my sorrow."

'So spake I, and straightway he answered, and said: "It is the son of Laertes, whose dwelling is in Ithaca; and I saw him in an island shedding big tears in the halls of the nymph Calypso, who holds him there perforce; so he may not come to his own country, for he has by him no ships with oars, and no companions to send him on his way over the broad back of the sea. But thou, Menelaus, son of Zeus, art not ordained to die and meet thy fate in Argos, the pasture-land of horses, but the deathless gods will convey thee to the Elysian plain and the world's end, where is Rhadamanthus of the fair hair, where life is easiest for men. No snow is there, nor yet great storm, nor any rain; but always ocean sendeth forth the breeze of the shrill West to blow cool on men: yea, for thou hast Helen to wife, and thereby they deem thee to be son of Zeus."

'So spake he, and plunged into the heaving sea; but I betook me to the ships with my godlike company, and my heart was darkly troubled as I went. Now after I had come down to the ship and to the sea, and had made ready our supper, and immortal night had come on, then did we lay us to rest upon the sea-beach. So soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, first of all we drew down our ships to the fair salt sea and placed the masts and the sails in the gallant ships, and the crew too climbed on board, and sat upon the benches and smote the grey sea water with their oars. Then back I went to the waters of Aegyptus, the heaven-fed stream, and there I moored the ships and offered the acceptable sacrifice of hecatombs. So when I had appeased the anger of the everlasting gods, I piled a barrow to Agamemnon, that his fame might never be quenched. So having fulfilled all, I set out for home, and the deathless gods gave me a fair wind, and brought me swiftly to mine own dear country. But lo, now tarry in my halls till it shall be the eleventh day hence or the twelfth. Then will I send thee with all honour on thy way, and give thee splendid gifts, three horses and a polished car; and moreover I will give thee a goodly chalice, that thou mayest pour forth before the deathless gods, and be mindful of me all the days of thy life.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'Son of Atreus, nay, hold me not long time here. Yea even for a year would I be content to sit by thee, and no desire for home or parents would come upon me; for I take wondrous pleasure in thy tales and talk. But already my company wearieth in fair Pylos, and yet thou art keeping me long time here. And whatsoever gift thou wouldest give me, let it be a thing to treasure; but horses I will take none to Ithaca, but leave them here to grace thine own house, for thou art lord of a wide plain wherein is lotus great plenty, and therein is spear-reed and wheat and rye, and white and spreading barley. In Ithaca there are no wide courses, nor meadow land at all. It is a pasture-land of goats, and more pleasant in my sight than one that pastureth horses; for of the isles that lie and lean upon the sea, none are fit for the driving of horses, or rich in meadow land, and least of all is Ithaca.'

So spake he, and Menelaus, of the loud war cry, smiled, and caressed him with his hand, and spake and hailed him:

'Thou art of gentle blood, dear child, so gentle the words thou speakest. Therefore I will make exchange of the presents, as I may. Of the gifts, such as are treasures stored in my house, I will give thee the goodliest and greatest of price. I will give thee a mixing bowl beautifully wrought; it is all of silver, and the lips thereof are finished with gold, the work of Hephaestus; and the hero Phaedimus, the king of the Sidonians, gave it me, when his house sheltered me on my coming thither, and to thee now would I give it.'

Even so they spake one to another, while the guests came to the palace of the divine king. They drave their sheep, and brought wine that maketh glad the heart of man: and their wives with fair tire sent them wheaten bread. Thus were these men preparing the feast in the halls.

But the wooers meantime were before the palace of Odysseus, taking their pleasure in casting of weights and spears, on a levelled place, as heretofore, in their insolence. And Antinous and god-like Eurymachus were seated there, the chief men of the wooers, who were far the most excellent of all. And Noemon, son of Phromius, drew nigh to them and spake unto Antinous and questioned him, saying:

'Antinous, know we at all, or know we not, when Telemachus will return from sandy Pylos? He hath departed with a ship of mine, and I have need thereof, to cross over into spacious Elis, where I have twelve brood mares with hardy mules unbroken at the teat; I would drive off one of these and break him in.'

So spake he, and they were amazed, for they deemed not that Telemachus had gone to Neleian Pylos, but that he was at home somewhere in the fields, whether among the flocks, or with the swineherd.

Then Antinous, son of Eupeithes, spake to him in turn: 'Tell me the plain truth; when did he go, and what noble youths went with him? Were they chosen men of Ithaca or hirelings and thralls of his own? He was in case to bring even that about. And tell me this in good sooth, that I may know for a surety: did he take thy black ship from thee perforce against thy will? or didst thou give it him of free will at his entreaty?'

Then Noemon, son of Phromius, answered him saying: 'I gave it him myself of free will. What can any man do, when such an one, so bestead with care, begs a favour? it were hard to deny the gift. The youths who next to us are noblest in the land, even these have gone with him; and I marked their leader on board ship, Mentor, or a god who in all things resembled Mentor. But one matter I marvel at: I saw the goodly Mentor here yesterday toward dawn, though already he had embarked for Pylos.'

He spake and withal departed to his father's house. And the proud spirits of these twain were angered, and they made the wooers sit down together and cease from their games. And among them spake Antinous, son of Eupeithes, in displeasure; and his black heart was wholly filled with rage, and his eyes were like flaming fire:

'Out on him, a proud deed hath Telemachus accomplished with a high hand, even this journey, and we thought that he would never bring it to pass! This lad hath clean gone without more ado, in spite of us all; his ship he hath let haul to the sea, and chosen the noblest in the township. He will begin to be our bane even more than heretofore; but may Zeus destroy his might, not ours, ere he reach the measure of manhood! But come, give me a swift ship and twenty men, that I may lie in watch and wait even for him on his way home, in the strait between Ithaca and rugged Samos, that so he may have a woeful end of his cruising in quest of his father.'

So spake he, and they all assented thereto, and bade him to the work. And thereupon they arose and went to the house of Odysseus.

Now it was no long time before Penelope heard of the counsel that the wooers had devised in the deep of their heart. For the henchman Medon told her thereof, who stood without the court and heard their purposes, while they were weaving their plot within. So he went on his way through the halls to bring the news to Penelope; and as he stept down over the threshold, Penelope spake unto him:

'Henchman, wherefore have the noble wooers sent thee forth? Was it to tell the handmaids of divine Odysseus to cease from their work, and prepare a banquet for them? Nay, after thus much wooing, never again may they come together, but here this day sup for their last and latest time; all ye who assemble so often, and waste much livelihood, the wealth of wise Telemachus! Long ago when ye were children, ye marked not your fathers' telling, what manner of man was Odysseus among them, one that wrought no iniquity toward any man, nor spake aught unrighteous in the township, as is the wont of divine kings. One man a king is like to hate, another he might chance to love. But never did he do aught at all presumptuously to any man. Nay, it is plain what spirit ye are of, and your unseemly deeds are manifest to all, nor is there any gratitude left for kindness done.'

Then Medon, wise of heart, answered her: 'Would, oh queen, that this were the crowning evil! But the wooers devise another far greater and more grievous, which I pray the son of Cronos may never fulfil! They are set on slaying Telemachus with the edge of the sword on his homeward way; for he is gone to fair Pylos and goodly Lacedaemon, to seek tidings of his father.'

So spake he, but her knees were loosened where she stood, and her heart melted within her, and long time was she speechless, and lo, her eyes were filled with tears and the voice of her utterance was stayed. And at the last she answered him and said:

'Henchman, wherefore I pray thee is my son departed? There is no need that he should go abroad on swift ships, that serve men for horses on the sea, and that cross the great wet waste. Is it that even his own name may no more be left upon earth?'

Then Medon, wise of heart, answered her: 'I know not whether some god set him on, or whether his own spirit stirred him to go to Pylos to seek tidings of his father's return, or to hear what end he met.'

He spake, and departed through the house of Odysseus, and on her fell a cloud of consuming grief; so that she might no more endure to seat her on a chair, whereof there were many in the house, but there she crouched on the threshold of her well-builded chamber, wailing piteously, and her handmaids round her made low moan, as many as were in the house with her, young and old. And Penelope spake among them pouring forth her lamentation:

'Hear me, my friends, for the Olympian sire hath given me pain exceedingly beyond all women who were born and bred in my day. For erewhile I lost my noble lord of the lion heart, adorned with all perfection among the Danaans, my good lord, whose fame is noised abroad from Hellas to mid Argos. And now again the storm-winds have snatched away my well-beloved son without tidings from our halls, nor heard I of his departure. Oh, women, hard of heart, that even ye did not each one let the thought come into your minds, to rouse me from my couch when he went to the black hollow ship, though ye knew full well thereof! For had I heard that he was purposing this journey, verily he should have stayed here still, though eager to be gone, or have left me dead in the halls. Howbeit let some one make haste to call the ancient Dolius, my thrall, whom my father gave me ere yet I had come hither, who keepeth my garden of trees. So shall he go straightway and sit by Laertes, and tell him all, if perchance Laertes may weave some counsel in his heart, and go forth and make his plaint to the people, who are purposed to destroy his seed, and the seed of god-like Odysseus.'

Then the good nurse Eurycleia answered her: 'Dear lady, aye, slay me if thou wilt with the pitiless sword or let me yet live on in the house,—yet will I not hide my saying from thee. I knew all this, and gave him whatsoever he commanded, bread and sweet wine. And he took a great oath of me not to tell thee till at least the twelfth day should come, or thou thyself shouldst miss him and hear of his departure, that thou mightest not mar thy fair flesh with thy tears. But now, wash thee in water, and take to thee clean raiment and ascend to thy upper chamber with the women thy handmaids, and pray to Athene, daughter of Zeus, lord of the aegis. For so may she save him even from death. And heap not troubles on an old man's trouble; for the seed of the son of Arceisius, is not, methinks, utterly hated by the blessed gods, but someone will haply yet remain to possess these lofty halls, and the fat fields far away.'

So spake she, and lulled her queen's lamentation, and made her eyes to cease from weeping. So she washed her in water, and took to her clean raiment, and ascended to the upper chamber with the women her handmaids, and placed the meal for sprinkling in a basket, and prayed unto Athene:

'Hear me, child of Zeus, lord of the aegis, unwearied maiden! If ever wise Odysseus in his halls burnt for thee fat slices of the thighs of heifer or of sheep, these things, I pray thee, now remember, and save my dear son, and ward from him the wooers in the naughtiness of their pride.'

Therewith she raised a cry, and the goddess heard her prayer. But the wooers clamoured through the shadowy halls, and thus would some proud youth say:

'Verily this queen of many wooers prepareth our marriage, nor knoweth at all how that for her son death hath been ordained.'

Thus would certain of them speak, but they knew not how these things were ordained. And Antinous made harangue and spake among them:

'Good sirs, my friends, shun all disdainful words alike, lest someone hear and tell it even in the house. But come let us arise, and in silence accomplish that whereof we spake, for the counsel pleased us every one.'

Therewith he chose twenty men that were the best, and they departed to the swift ship and the sea-banks. So first of all they drew the ship down to the deep water, and placed the mast and sails in the black ship, and fixed the oars in leathern loops all orderly, and spread forth the white sails. And squires, haughty of heart, bare for them their arms. And they moored her high out in the shore water, and themselves disembarked. There they supped and waited for evening to come on.

But the wise Penelope lay there in her upper chamber, fasting and tasting neither meat nor drink, musing whether her noble son should escape death, or even fall before the proud wooers. And as a lion broods all in fear among the press of men, when they draw the crafty ring around him, so deeply was she musing when deep sleep came over her. And she sank back in sleep and all her joints were loosened.

Now the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, turned to other thoughts. She made a phantom, and fashioned it after the likeness of a woman, Iphthime, daughter of great-hearted Icarius, whom Eumelus wedded, whose dwelling was in Pherae. And she sent it to the house of divine Odysseus to bid Penelope, amid her sorrow and lamenting, to cease from her weeping and tearful lamentation. So the phantom passed into the chamber by the thong of the bolt, and stood above her head and spake unto her, saying:

'Sleepest thou, Penelope, stricken at heart? Nay, even the gods who live at ease suffer thee not to wail or be afflicted, seeing that thy son is yet to return; for no sinner is he in the eyes of the gods.'

Then wise Penelope made her answer as she slumbered very softly at the gates of dreams:

'Wherefore, sister, hast thou come hither, that before wert not wont to come, for thou hast thine habitation very far away? Biddest thou me indeed to cease from the sorrows and pains, so many that disquiet my heart and soul? Erewhile I lost my noble lord of the lion heart, adorned with all perfection among the Danaans, my true lord, whose fame is noised abroad from Hellas to mid Argos. And now, again, my well-beloved son is departed on his hollow ship, poor child, not skilled in toils or in the gatherings of men. For him I sorrow yet more than for my lord, and I tremble and fear for him lest aught befal him, whether, it may be, amid that folk where he is gone, or in the deep. For many formen devise evil against him, and go about to kill him, or ever he come to his own country.'

And the dim phantom answered her, and said: 'Take courage, and be not so sorely afraid. For lo, such a friend goes to guide him, as all men pray to stand by them, for that she hath the power, even Pallas Athene. And she pitieth thee in thy sorrow, and now hath sent me forth to speak these words to thee.'

And wise Penelope answered her, saying: 'If thou art indeed a god, and hast heard the word of a god, come, I pray thee, and tell me tidings concerning that ill-fated man, whether perchance he is yet alive and sees the light of the sun, or hath already died, and is a dweller in the house of Hades.'

And the dim phantom answered her and said: 'Concerning him I will not tell thee all the tale, whether he be alive or dead; it is ill to speak words light as wind.'

Therewith the phantom slipped away by the bolt of the door and passed into the breath of the wind. And the daughter of Icarius started up from sleep, and her heart was cheered, so clear was the vision that sped toward her in the dead of the night.

Meanwhile the wooers had taken ship and were sailing over the wet ways, pondering in their hearts sheer death for Telemachus. Now there is a rocky isle in the mid sea, midway between Ithaca and rugged Samos, Asteris, a little isle; and there is a harbour therein with a double entrance, where ships may ride. There the Achaeans abode lying in wait for Telemachus.

BOOK V

The Gods in council command Calypso by Hermes to send away Odysseus on a raft of trees; and Poseidon, returning from Ethiopia and seeing him on the coast of Phaeacia, scattered his raft; and how by the help of Ino he was thrown ashore, and slept on a heap of dry leaves till the next day.

Now the Dawn arose from her couch, from the side of the lordly Tithonus, to bear light to the immortals and to mortal men. And lo, the gods were gathering to session, and among them Zeus, that thunders on high, whose might is above all And Athene told them the tale of the many woes of Odysseus, recalling them to mind; for near her heart was he that then abode in the dwelling of the nymph:

'Father Zeus, and all ye other blessed gods that live for ever, henceforth let not any sceptred king be kind and gentle with all his heart, nor minded to do righteously, but let him alway be a hard man and work unrighteousness, for behold, there is none that remembereth divine Odysseus of the people whose lord he was, and was gentle as a father. Howbeit, as for him he lieth in an island suffering strong pains, in the halls of the nymph Calypso, who holdeth him perforce; so he may not reach his own country, for he hath no ships by him with oars, and no companions to send him on his way over the broad back of the sea. And now, again, they are set on slaying his beloved son on his homeward way, for he is gone to fair Pylos and to goodly Lacedaemon, to seek tidings of his father.'

And Zeus, gatherer of the clouds, answered and spake unto her: 'My child, what word hath escaped the door of thy lips? Nay, didst thou not thyself plan this device, that Odysseus may assuredly take vengeance on those men at his coming? As for Telemachus, do thou guide him by thine art, as well thou mayest, that so he may come to his own country all unharmed, and the wooers may return in their ship with their labour all in vain.'

Therewith he spake to Hermes, his dear son: 'Hermes, forasmuch as even in all else thou art our herald, tell unto the nymph of the braided tresses my unerring counsel, even the return of the patient Odysseus, how he is to come to his home, with no furtherance of gods or of mortal men. Nay, he shall sail on a well-bound raft, in sore distress, and on the twentieth day arrive at fertile Scheria, even at the land of the Phaeacians, who are near of kin to the gods. And they shall give him all worship heartily as to a god, and send him on his way in a ship to his own dear country, with gifts of bronze and gold, and raiment in plenty, much store, such as never would Odysseus have won for himself out of Troy, yea, though he had returned unhurt with the share of the spoil that fell to him. On such wise is he fated to see his friends, and come to his high-roofed home and his own country.'

So spake he, nor heedless was the messenger, the slayer of Argos. Straightway he bound beneath his feet his lovely golden sandals, that wax not old, that bare him alike over the wet sea and over the limitless land, swift as the breath of the wind. And he took the wand wherewith he lulls the eyes of whomso he will, while others again he even wakes from out of sleep. With this rod in his hand flew the strong slayer of Argos. Above Pieria he passed and leapt from the upper air into the deep. Then he sped along the wave like the cormorant, that chaseth the fishes through the perilous gulfs of the unharvested sea, and wetteth his thick plumage in the brine. Such like did Hermes ride upon the press of the waves. But when he had now reached that far-off isle, he went forth from the sea of violet blue to get him up into the land, till he came to a great cave, wherein dwelt the nymph of the braided tresses: and he found her within. And on the hearth there was a great fire burning, and from afar through the isle was smelt the fragrance of cleft cedar blazing, and of sandal wood. And the nymph within was singing with a sweet voice as she fared to and fro before the loom, and wove with a shuttle of gold. And round about the cave there was a wood blossoming, alder and poplar and sweet-smelling cypress. And therein roasted birds long of wing, owls and falcons and chattering sea-crows, which have their business in the waters. And lo, there about the hollow cave trailed a gadding garden vine, all rich with clusters. And fountains four set orderly were running with clear water, hard by one another, turned each to his own course. And all around soft meadows bloomed of violets and parsley, yea, even a deathless god who came thither might wonder at the sight and be glad at heart. There the messenger, the slayer of Argos, stood and wondered. Now when he had gazed at all with wonder, anon he went into the wide cave; nor did Calypso, that fair goddess, fail to know him, when she saw him face to face; for the gods use not to be strange one to another, the immortals, not though one have his habitation far away. But he found not Odysseus, the great-hearted, within the cave, who sat weeping on the shore even as aforetime, straining his soul with tears and groans and griefs, and as he wept he looked wistfully over the unharvested deep. And Calypso, that fair goddess, questioned Hermes, when she had made him sit on a bright shining seat:

'Wherefore, I pray thee, Hermes, of the golden wand, hast thou come hither, worshipful and welcome, whereas as of old thou wert not wont to visit me? Tell me all thy thought; my heart is set on fulfilling it, if fulfil it I may, and if it hath been fulfilled in the counsel of fate. But now follow me further, that I may set before thee the entertainment of strangers.'

Therewith the goddess spread a table with ambrosia and set it by him, and mixed the ruddy nectar. So the messenger, the slayer of Argos, did eat and drink. Now after he had supped and comforted his soul with food, at the last he answered, and spake to her on this wise:

'Thou makest question of me on my coming, a goddess of a god, and I will tell thee this my saying truly, at thy command. 'Twas Zeus that bade me come hither, by no will of mine; nay, who of his free will would speed over such a wondrous space of brine, whereby is no city of mortals that do sacrifice to the gods, and offer choice hecatombs? But surely it is in no wise possible for another god to go beyond or to make void the purpose of Zeus, lord of the aegis. He saith that thou hast with thee a man most wretched beyond his fellows, beyond those men that round the burg of Priam for nine years fought, and in the tenth year sacked the city and departed homeward. Yet on the way they sinned against Athene, and she raised upon them an evil blast and long waves of the sea. Then all the rest of his good company was lost, but it came to pass that the wind bare and the wave brought him thither. And now Zeus biddeth thee send him hence with what speed thou mayest, for it is not ordained that he die away from his friends, but rather it is his fate to look on them even yet, and to come to his high-roofed home and his own country.'

So spake he, and Calypso, that fair goddess, shuddered and uttered her voice, and spake unto him winged words: 'Hard are ye gods and jealous exceeding, who ever grudge goddesses openly to mate with men, if any make a mortal her dear bedfellow. Even so when rosy-fingered Dawn took Orion for her lover, ye gods that live at ease were jealous thereof, till chaste Artemis, of the golden throne, slew him in Ortygia with the visitation of her gentle shafts. So too when fair-tressed Demeter yielded to her love, and lay with Iasion in the thrice-ploughed fallow field, Zeus was not long without tidings thereof, and cast at him with his white bolt and slew him. So again ye gods now grudge that a mortal man should dwell with me. Him I saved as he went all alone bestriding the keel of a bark, for that Zeus had crushed and cleft his swift ship with a white bolt in the midst of the wine-dark deep. There all the rest of his good company was lost, but it came to pass that the wind bare and the wave brought him hither. And him have I loved and cherished, and I said that I would make him to know not death and age for ever. Yet forasmuch as it is in no wise possible for another god to go beyond, or make void the purpose of Zeus, lord of the aegis, let him away over the unharvested seas, if the summons and the bidding be of Zeus. But I will give him no despatch, not I, for I have no ships by me with oars, nor company to bear him on his way over the broad back of the sea. Yet will I be forward to put this in his mind, and will hide nought, that all unharmed he may come to his own country.'

Then the messenger, the slayer of Argos, answered her: 'Yea, speed him now upon his path and have regard unto the wrath of Zeus, lest haply he be angered and bear hard on thee hereafter.'

Therewith the great slayer of Argos departed, but the lady nymph went on her way to the great-hearted Odysseus, when she had heard the message of Zeus. And there she found him sitting on the shore, and his eyes were never dry of tears, and his sweet life was ebbing away as he mourned for his return; for the nymph no more found favour in his sight. Howsoever by night he would sleep by her, as needs he must, in the hollow caves, unwilling lover by a willing lady. And in the day-time he would sit on the rocks and on the beach, straining his soul with tears, and groans, and griefs, and through his tears he would look wistfully over the unharvested deep. So standing near him that fair goddess spake to him:

'Hapless man, sorrow no more I pray thee in this isle, nor let thy good life waste away, for even now will I send thee hence with all my heart. Nay, arise and cut long beams, and fashion a wide raft with the axe, and lay deckings high thereupon, that it may bear thee over the misty deep. And I will place therein bread and water, and red wine to thy heart's desire, to keep hunger far away. And I will put raiment upon thee, and send a fair gale in thy wake, that so thou mayest come all unharmed to thine own country, if indeed it be the good pleasure of the gods who hold wide heaven, who are stronger than I am both to will and to do.'

So she spake, and the steadfast goodly Odysseus shuddered, and uttering his voice spake to her winged words: 'Herein, goddess, thou hast plainly some other thought, and in no wise my furtherance, for that thou biddest me to cross in a raft the great gulf of the sea so dread and difficult, which not even the swift gallant ships pass over rejoicing in the breeze of Zeus. Nor would I go aboard a raft to displeasure thee, unless thou wilt deign, O goddess, to swear a great oath not to plan any hidden guile to mine own hurt.'

So spake he, and Calypso, the fair goddess, smiled and caressed him with her hand, and spake and hailed him:

'Knavish thou art, and no weakling in wit, thou that hast conceived and spoken such a word. Let earth be now witness hereto, and the wide heaven above, and that water of the Styx that flows below, the greatest oath and the most terrible to the blessed gods, that I will not plan any hidden guile to thine own hurt. Nay, but my thoughts are such, and such will be my counsel, as I would devise for myself, if ever so sore a need came over me. For I too have a righteous mind, and my heart within me is not of iron, but pitiful even as thine.'

Therewith the fair goddess led the way quickly, and he followed hard in the steps of the goddess. And they reached the hollow cave, the goddess and the man; so he sat him down upon the chair whence Hermes had arisen, and the nymph placed by him all manner of food to eat and drink, such as is meat for men. As for her she sat over against divine Odysseus, and the handmaids placed by her ambrosia and nectar. So they put forth their hands upon the good cheer set before them. But after they had taken their fill of meat and drink, Calypso, the fair goddess, spake first and said:

'Son of Laertes, of the seed of Zeus, Odysseus of many devices, so it is indeed thy wish to get thee home to thine own dear country even in this hour? Good fortune go with thee even so! Yet didst thou know in thine heart what a measure of suffering thou art ordained to fulfil, or ever thou reach thine own country, here, even here, thou wouldst abide with me and keep this house, and wouldst never taste of death, though thou longest to see thy wife, for whom thou hast ever a desire day by day. Not in sooth that I avow me to be less noble than she in form or fashion, for it is in no wise meet that mortal women should match them with immortals, in shape and comeliness.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered, and spake unto her: 'Be not wroth with me hereat, goddess and queen. Myself I know it well, how wise Penelope is meaner to look upon than thou, in comeliness and stature. But she is mortal and thou knowest not age nor death. Yet even so, I wish and long day by day to fare homeward and see the day of my returning. Yea, and if some god shall wreck me in the wine-dark deep, even so I will endure, with a heart within me patient of affliction. For already have I suffered full much, and much have I toiled in perils of waves and war; let this be added to the tale of those.'

So spake he, and the sun sank and darkness came on. Then they twain went into the chamber of the hollow rock, and had their delight of love, abiding each by other.

So soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, anon Odysseus put on him a mantle and doublet, and the nymph clad her in a great shining robe, light of woof and gracious, and about her waist she cast a fair golden girdle, and a veil withal upon her head. Then she considered of the sending of Odysseus, the great-hearted. She gave him a great axe, fitted to his grasp, an axe of bronze double-edged, and with a goodly handle of olive wood fastened well. Next she gave him a polished adze, and she led the way to the border of the isle where tall trees grew, alder and poplar, and pine that reacheth unto heaven, seasoned long since and sere, that might lightly float for him. Now after she had shown him where the tall trees grew, Calypso, the fair goddess, departed homeward. And he set to cutting timber, and his work went busily. Twenty trees in all he felled, and then trimmed them with the axe of bronze, and deftly smoothed them, and over them made straight the line. Meanwhile Calypso, the fair goddess, brought him augers, so he bored each piece and jointed them together, and then made all fast with trenails and dowels. Wide as is the floor of a broad ship of burden, which some men well skilled in carpentry may trace him out, of such beam did Odysseus fashion his broad raft. And thereat he wrought, and set up the deckings, fitting them to the close-set uprights, and finished them off with long gunwales, and therein he set a mast, and a yard-arm fitted thereto, and moreover he made him a rudder to guide the craft. And he fenced it with wattled osier withies from stem to stern, to be a bulwark against the wave, and piled up wood to back them. Meanwhile Calypso, the fair goddess, brought him web of cloth to make him sails; and these too he fashioned very skilfully. And he made fast therein braces and halyards and sheets, and at last he pushed the raft with levers down to the fair salt sea.

It was the fourth day when he had accomplished all. And, lo, on the fifth, the fair Calypso sent him on his way from the island, when she had bathed him and clad him in fragrant attire. Moreover, the goddess placed on board the ship two skins, one of dark wine, and another, a great one, of water, and corn too in a wallet, and she set therein a store of dainties to his heart's desire, and sent forth a warm and gentle wind to blow. And goodly Odysseus rejoiced as he set his sails to the breeze. So he sate and cunningly guided the craft with the helm, nor did sleep fall upon his eyelids, as he viewed the Pleiads and Boötes, that setteth late, and the Bear, which they likewise call the Wain, which turneth ever in one place, and keepeth watch upon Orion, and alone hath no part in the baths of Ocean. This star, Calypso, the fair goddess, bade him to keep ever on the left as he traversed the deep. Ten days and seven he sailed traversing the deep, and on the eighteenth day appeared the shadowy hills of the land of the Phaeacians, at the point where it lay nearest to him; and it showed like a shield in the misty deep.

Now the lord, the shaker of the earth, on his way from the Ethiopians espied him afar off from the mountains of the Solymi: even thence he saw Odysseus as he sailed over the deep; and he was yet more angered in spirit, and wagging his head he communed with his own heart: 'Lo now, it must be that the gods at the last have changed their purpose concerning Odysseus, while I was away among the Ethiopians. And now he is nigh to the Phaeacian land, where it is ordained that he escape the great issues of the woe which hath come upon him. But, methinks, that even yet I will drive him far enough in the path of suffering.'

With that he gathered the clouds and troubled the waters of the deep, grasping his trident in his hands; and he roused all storms of all manner of winds, and shrouded in clouds the land and sea: and down sped night from heaven. The East Wind and the South Wind clashed, and the stormy West, and the North, that is born in the bright air, rolling onward a great wave. Then were the knees of Odysseus loosened and his heart melted, and heavily he spake to his own great spirit:

'Oh, wretched man that I am! what is to befal me at the last? I fear that indeed the goddess spake all things truly, who said that I should fill up the measure of sorrow on the deep, or ever I came to mine own country; and lo, all these things have an end. In such wise doth Zeus crown the wide heaven with clouds, and hath troubled the deep, and the blasts rush on of all the winds; yea, now is utter doom assured me. Thrice blessed those Danaans, yea, four times blessed, who perished on a time in wide Troy-land, doing a pleasure to the sons of Atreus! Would to God that I too had died, and met my fate on that day when the press of Trojans cast their bronze-shod spears upon me, fighting for the body of the son of Peleus! So should I have gotten my dues of burial, and the Achaeans would have spread my fame; but now it is my fate to be overtaken by a pitiful death.'

Even as he spake, the great wave smote down upon him, driving on in terrible wise, that the raft reeled again. And far therefrom he fell, and lost the helm from his hand; and the fierce blast of the jostling winds came and brake his mast in the midst, and sail and yard-arm fell afar into the deep. Long time the water kept him under, nor could he speedily rise from beneath the rush of the mighty wave: for the garments hung heavy which fair Calypso gave him. But late and at length he came up, and spat forth from his mouth the bitter salt water, which ran down in streams from his head. Yet even so forgat he not his raft, for all his wretched plight, but made a spring after it in the waves, and clutched it to him, and sat in the midst thereof, avoiding the issues of death; and the great wave swept it hither and thither along the stream.

And as the North Wind in the harvest tide sweeps the thistledown along the plain, and close the tufts cling each to other, even so the winds bare the raft hither and thither along the main. Now the South would toss it to the North to carry, and now again the East would yield it to the West to chase.

But the daughter of Cadmus marked him, Ino of the fair ankles, Leucothea, who in time past was a maiden of mortal speech, but now in the depths of the salt sea she had gotten her share of worship from the gods. She took pity on Odysseus in his wandering and travail, and she rose, like a sea-gull on the wing, from the depth of the mere, and sat upon the well-bound raft and spake saying:

'Hapless one, wherefore was Poseidon, shaker of the earth, so wondrous wroth with thee, seeing that he soweth for thee the seeds of many evils? Yet shall he not make a full end of thee, for all his desire. But do even as I tell thee, and methinks thou art not witless. Cast off these garments, and leave the raft to drift before the winds, but do thou swim with thine hands and strive to win a footing on the coast of the Phaeacians, where it is decreed that thou escape. Here, take this veil immortal and wind it about thy breast; so is there no fear that thou suffer aught or perish. But when thou hast laid hold of the mainland with thy hands, loose it from off thee and cast it into the wine-dark deep far from the land, and thyself turn away.'

With that the goddess gave the veil, and for her part dived back into the heaving deep, like a sea-gull: and the dark wave closed over her. But the steadfast goodly Odysseus pondered, and heavily he spake to his own brave spirit:

'Ah, woe is me! Can it be that some one of the immortals is weaving a new snare for me, that she bids me quit my raft? Nay verily, I will not yet obey, for I had sight of the shore yet a long way off, where she told me that I might escape. I am resolved what I will do;—and methinks on this wise it is best. So long as the timbers abide in the dowels, so long will I endure steadfast in affliction, but so soon as the wave hath shattered my raft asunder, I will swim, for meanwhile no better counsel may be.'

While yet he pondered these things in his heart and soul, Poseidon, shaker of the earth, stirred against him a great wave, terrible and grievous, and vaulted from the crest, and therewith smote him. And as when a great tempestuous wind tosseth a heap of parched husks, and scatters them this way and that, even so did the wave scatter the long beams of the raft. But Odysseus bestrode a single beam, as one rideth on a courser, and stript him of the garments which fair Calypso gave him. And presently he wound the veil beneath his breast, and fell prone into the sea, outstretching his hands as one eager to swim. And the lord, the shaker of the earth, saw him and wagged his head, and communed with his own soul. 'Even so, after all thy sufferings, go wandering over the deep, till thou shalt come among a people, the fosterlings of Zeus. Yet for all that I deem not that thou shalt think thyself too lightly afflicted.' Therewith he lashed his steeds of the flowing manes, and came to Aegae, where is his lordly home.

. But Athene, daughter of Zeus, turned to new thoughts. Behold, she bound up the courses of the other winds, and charged them all to cease and be still; but she roused the swift North and brake the waves before him, that so Odysseus, of the seed of Zeus, might mingle with the Phaeacians, lovers of the oar, avoiding death and the fates.

So for two nights and two days he was wandering in the swell of the sea, and much his heart boded of death. But when at last the fair-tressed Dawn brought the full light of the third day, thereafter the breeze fell, and lo, there was a breathless calm, and with a quick glance ahead, (he being upborne on a great wave,) he saw the land very near. And even as when most welcome to his children is the sight of a father's life, who lies in sickness and strong pains long wasting away, some angry god assailing him; and to their delight the gods have loosed him from his trouble; so welcome to Odysseus showed land and wood; and he swam onward being eager to set foot on the strand. But when he was within earshot of the shore, and heard now the thunder of the sea against the reefs—for the great wave crashed against the dry land belching in terrible wise, and all was covered with foam of the sea,—for there were no harbours for ships nor shelters, but jutting headlands and reefs and cliffs; then at last the knees of Odysseus were loosened and his heart melted, and in heaviness he spake to his own brave spirit:

'Ah me! now that beyond all hope Zeus hath given me sight of land, and withal I have cloven my way through this gulf of the sea, here there is no place to land on from out of the grey water. For without are sharp crags, and round them the wave roars surging, and sheer the smooth rock rises, and the sea is deep thereby, so that in no wise may I find firm foothold and escape my bane, for as I fain would go ashore, the great wave may haply snatch and dash me on the jagged rock—and a wretched endeavour that would be. But if I swim yet further along the coast to find, if I may, spits that take the waves aslant and havens of the sea, I fear lest the storm-winds catch me again and bear me over the teeming deep, making heavy moan; or else some god may even send forth against me a monster from out of the shore water; and many such pastureth the renowned Amphitrite. For I know how wroth against me hath been the great Shaker of the Earth.'

Whilst yet he pondered these things in his heart and mind, a great wave bore him to the rugged shore. There would he have been stript of his skin and all his bones been broken, but that the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, put a thought into his heart. He rushed in, and with both his hands clutched the rock, whereto he clung till the great wave went by. So he escaped that peril, but again with backward wash it leapt on him and smote him and cast him forth into the deep. And as when the cuttlefish is dragged forth from his chamber, the many pebbles clinging to his suckers, even so was the skin stript from his strong hand against the rocks, and the great wave closed over him. There of a truth would luckless Odysseus have perished beyond that which was ordained, had not grey-eyed Athene given him sure counsel. He rose from the line of the breakers that belch upon the shore, and swam outside, ever looking landwards, to find, if he might, spits that take the waves aslant, and havens of the sea. But when he came in his swimming over against the mouth of a fair-flowing river, whereby the place seemed best in his eyes, smooth of rocks, and withal there was a covert from the wind, Odysseus felt the river running, and prayed to him in his heart:

'Hear me, O king, whosoever thou art; unto thee am I come, as to one to whom prayer is made, while I flee the rebukes of Poseidon from the deep. Yea, reverend even to the deathless gods is that man who comes as a wanderer, even as I now have come to thy stream and to thy knees after much travail. Nay pity me, O king; for I avow myself thy suppliant.'

So spake he, and the god straightway stayed his stream and withheld his waves, and made the water smooth before him, and brought him safely to the mouths of the river. And his knees bowed and his stout hands fell, for his heart was broken by the brine. And his flesh was all swollen and a great stream of sea water gushed up through his mouth and nostrils. So he lay without breath or speech, swooning, such terrible weariness came upon him. But when now his breath returned and his spirit came to him again, he loosed from off him the veil of the goddess, and let it fall into the salt flowing river. And the great wave bare it back down the stream, and lightly Ino caught it in her hands. Then Odysseus turned from the river, and fell back in the reeds, and kissed earth, the grain-giver, and heavily he spake unto his own brave spirit:

'Ah, woe is me! what is to betide me? what shall happen unto me at the last? If I watch in the river bed all through the careful night, I fear that the bitter frost and fresh dew may overcome me, and I breathe forth my life for faintness, for the river breeze blows cold betimes in the morning. But if I climb the hill-side up to the shady wood, and there take rest in the thickets, though perchance the cold and weariness leave hold of me, and sweet sleep may come over me, I fear lest of wild beasts I become the spoil and prey.'

So as he thought thereon this seemed to him the better way. He went up to the wood, and found it nigh the water in a place of wide prospect. So he crept beneath twin bushes that grew from one stem, both olive trees, one of them wild olive. Through these the force of the wet winds blew never, neither did the bright sun light on it with his rays, nor could the rain pierce through, so close were they twined either to other; and thereunder crept Odysseus, and anon he heaped together with his hands a broad couch; for of fallen leaves there was great plenty, enough to cover two or three men in winter time, however hard the weather. And the steadfast goodly Odysseus beheld it and rejoiced, and he laid him in the midst thereof and flung over him the fallen leaves. And as when a man hath hidden away a brand in the black embers at an upland farm, one that hath no neighbours nigh, and so saveth the seed of fire, that he may not have to seek a light otherwhere, even so did Odysseus cover him with the leaves. And Athene shed sleep upon his eyes, that so it might soon release him from his weary travail, overshadowing his eyelids.

BOOK VI

Nausicaa, going to a river near that place to wash the clothes of her father, mother, and brethren, while the clothes were drying played with her maids at ball; and Odysseus coming forth is fed and clothed, and led on his way to the house of her father, King Alcinous.

So there he lay asleep, the steadfast goodly Odysseus, fordone with toil and drowsiness. Meanwhile Athene went to the land and the city of the Phaeacians, who of old, upon a time, dwelt in spacious Hypereia; near the Cyclopes they dwelt, men exceeding proud, who harried them continually, being mightier than they. Thence the godlike Nausithous made them depart, and he carried them away, and planted them in Scheria, far off from men that live by bread. And he drew a wall around the town, and builded houses and made temples for the gods and meted out the fields. Howbeit ere this had he been stricken by fate, and had gone down to the house of Hades, and now Alcinous was reigning, with wisdom granted by the gods. To his house went the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, devising a return for the great-hearted Odysseus. She betook her to the rich-wrought bower, wherein was sleeping a maiden like to the gods in form and comeliness, Nausicaa, the daughter of Alcinous, high of heart. Beside her on either hand of the pillars of the door were two handmaids, dowered with beauty from the Graces, and the shining doors were shut.

But the goddess, fleet as the breath of the wind, swept towards the couch of the maiden, and stood above her head, and spake to her in the semblance of the daughter of a famous seafarer, Dymas, a girl of like age with Nausicaa, who had found grace in her sight. In her shape the grey-eyed Athene spake to the princess, saying:

'Nausicaa, how hath thy mother so heedless a maiden to her daughter? Lo, thou hast shining raiment that lies by thee uncared for, and thy marriage-day is near at hand, when thou thyself must needs go beautifully clad, and have garments to give to them who shall lead thee to the house of the bridegroom! And, behold, these are the things whence a good report goes abroad among men, wherein a father and lady mother take delight. But come, let us arise and go a-washing with the breaking of the day, and I will follow with thee to be thy mate in the toil, that without delay thou mayst get thee ready, since truly thou art not long to be a maiden. Lo, already they are wooing thee, the noblest youths of all the Phaeacians, among that people whence thou thyself dost draw thy lineage. So come, beseech thy noble father betimes in the morning to furnish thee with mules and a wain to carry the men's raiment, and the robes, and the shining coverlets. Yea and for thyself it is seemlier far to go thus than on foot, for the places where we must wash are a great way off the town.'

So spake the grey-eyed Athene, and departed to Olympus, where, as they say, is the seat of the gods that standeth fast for ever. Not by winds is it shaken, nor ever wet with rain, nor doth the snow come nigh thereto, but most clear air is spread about it cloudless, and the white light floats over it. Therein the blessed gods are glad for all their days, and thither Athene went when she had shown forth all to the maiden.

Anon came the throned Dawn, and awakened Nausicaa of the fair robes, who straightway marvelled on the dream, and went through the halls to tell her parents, her father dear and her mother. And she found them within, her mother sitting by the hearth with the women her handmaids, spinning yarn of sea-purple satin, but her father she met as he was going forth to the renowned kings in their council, whither the noble Phaeacians called him. Standing close by her dear father she spake, saying: 'Father, dear, couldst thou not lend me a high waggon with strong wheels, that I may take the goodly raiment to the river to wash, so much as I have lying soiled? Yea and it is seemly that thou thyself, when thou art with the princes in council, should have fresh raiment to wear. Also, there are five dear sons of thine in the halls, two married, but three are lusty bachelors, and these are always eager for new-washen garments wherein to go to the dances; for all these things have I taken thought.'

This she said, because she was ashamed to speak of glad marriage to her father; but he saw all and answered, saying:

'Neither the mules nor aught else do I grudge thee, my child. Go thy ways, and the thralls shall get thee ready a high waggon with good wheels, and fitted with an upper frame.'

Therewith he called to his men, and they gave ear, and without the palace they made ready the smooth-running mule-wain, and led the mules beneath the yoke, and harnessed them under the car, while the maiden brought forth from her bower the shining raiment. This she stored in the polished car, and her mother filled a basket with all manner of food to the heart's desire, dainties too she set therein, and she poured wine into a goat-skin bottle, while Nausicaa climbed into the wain. And her mother gave her soft olive oil also in a golden cruse, that she and her maidens might anoint themselves after the bath. Then Nausicaa took the whip and the shining reins, and touched the mules to start them; then there was a clatter of hoofs, and on they strained without flagging, with their load of the raiment and the maiden. Not alone did she go, for her attendants followed with her.

Now when they were come to the beautiful stream of the river, where truly were the unfailing cisterns, and bright water welled up free from beneath, and flowed past, enough to wash the foulest garments clean, there the girls unharnessed the mules from under the chariot, and turning them loose they drove them along the banks of the eddying river to graze on the honey-sweet clover. Then they took the garments from the wain, in their hands, and bore them to the black water, and briskly trod them down in the trenches, in busy rivalry. Now when they had washed and cleansed all the stains, they spread all out in order along the shore of the deep, even where the sea, in beating on the coast, washed the pebbles clean. Then having bathed and anointed them well with olive oil, they took their mid-day meal on the river's banks, waiting till the clothes should dry in the brightness of the sun. Anon, when they were satisfied with food, the maidens and the princess, they fell to playing at ball, casting away their tires, and among them Nausicaa of the white arms began the song. And even as Artemis, the archer, moveth down the mountain, either along the ridges of lofty Taygetus or Erymanthus, taking her pastime in the chase of boars and swift deer, and with her the wild wood-nymphs disport them, the daughters of Zeus, lord of the aegis, and Leto is glad at heart, while high over all she rears her head and brows, and easily may she be known,—but all are fair; even so the girl unwed outshone her maiden company.

But when now she was about going homewards, after yoking the mules and folding up the goodly raiment, then grey-eyed Athene turned to other thoughts, that so Odysseus might awake, and see the lovely maiden, who should be his guide to the city of the Phaeacian men. So then the princess threw the ball at one of her company; she missed the girl, and cast the ball into the deep eddying current, whereat they all raised a piercing cry. Then the goodly Odysseus awoke and sat up, pondering in his heart and spirit:

'Woe is me! to what men's land am I come now? say, are they froward, and wild, and unjust, or are they hospitable, and of God-fearing mind? How shrill a cry of maidens rings round me, of the nymphs that hold the steep hill-tops, and the river-springs, and the grassy water meadows! It must be, methinks, that I am near men of human speech. Go to, I myself will make trial and see.'

Therewith the goodly Odysseus crept out from under the coppice, having broken with his strong hand a leafy bough from the thick wood, to hold athwart his body, that it might hide his nakedness withal. And forth he sallied like a lion mountain-bred, trusting in his strength, who fares out blown and rained upon, with flaming eyes; amid the kine he goes or amid the sheep or in the track of the wild deer; yea, his belly bids him to make assay upon the flocks, even within a close-penned fold. Even so Odysseus was fain to draw nigh to the fair-tressed maidens, all naked as he was, such need had come upon him. But he was terrible in their eyes, being marred with the salt sea foam, and they fled cowering here and there about the jutting spits of shore. And the daughter of Alcinous alone stood firm, for Athene gave her courage of heart, and took all trembling from her limbs. So she halted and stood over against him, and Odysseus considered whether he should clasp the knees of the lovely maiden, and so make his prayer, or should stand as he was, apart, and beseech her with smooth words, if haply she might show him the town, and give him raiment. And as he thought within himself, it seemed better to stand apart, and beseech her with smooth words, lest the maiden should be angered with him if he touched her knees: so straightway he spake a sweet and cunning word:

'I supplicate thee, O queen, whether thou art a goddess or a mortal! If indeed thou art a goddess of them that keep the wide heaven; to Artemis, then, the daughter of great Zeus, I mainly liken thee, for beauty and stature and shapeliness. But if thou art one of the daughters of men who dwell on earth, thrice blessed are thy father and thy lady mother, and thrice blessed thy brethren. Surely their souls ever glow with gladness for thy sake, each time they see thee entering the dance, so fair a flower of maidens. But he is of heart the most blessed beyond all other who shall prevail with gifts of wooing, and lead thee to his home. Never have mine eyes beheld such an one among mortals, neither man nor woman; great awe comes upon me as I look on thee. Yet in Delos once I saw as goodly a thing: a young sapling of a palm tree springing by the altar of Apollo. For thither too I went, and much people with me, on that path where my sore troubles were to be. Yea, and when I looked thereupon, long time I marvelled in spirit,—for never grew there yet so goodly a shoot from ground,—even in such wise as I wonder at thee, lady, and am astonied and do greatly fear to touch thy knees, though grievous sorrow is upon me. Yesterday, on the twentieth day, I escaped from the wine-dark deep, but all that time continually the wave bare me, and the vehement winds drave, from the isle

Ogygia. And now some god has cast me on this shore, that here too, methinks, some evil may betide me; for I trow not that trouble will cease; the gods ere that time will yet bring many a thing to pass. But, queen, have pity on me, for after many trials and sore to thee first of all am I come, and of the other folk, who hold this city and land, I know no man. Nay show me the town, give me an old garment to cast about me, if thou hadst, when thou camest here, any wrap for the linen. And may the gods grant thee all thy heart's desire: a husband and a home, and a mind at one with his may they give—a good gift, for there is nothing mightier and nobler than when man and wife are of one heart and mind in a house, a grief to their foes, and to their friends great joy, but their own hearts know it best.'

Then Nausicaa of the white arms answered him, and said: 'Stranger, forasmuch as thou seemest no evil man nor foolish —and it is Olympian Zeus himself that giveth weal to men, to the good and to the evil, to each one as he will, and this thy lot doubtless is of him, and so thou must in anywise endure it: —and now, since thou hast come to our city and our land, thou shalt not lack raiment, nor aught else that is the due of a hapless suppliant, when he has met them who can befriend him. And I will show thee the town, and name the name of the people. The Phaeacians hold this city and land, and I am the daughter of Alcinous, great of heart, on whom all the might and force of the Phaeacians depend.'

Thus she spake, and called to her maidens of the fair tresses: 'Halt, my maidens, whither flee ye at the sight of a man? Ye surely do not take him for an enemy? That mortal breathes not, and never will be born, who shall come with war to the land of the Phaeacians, for they are very dear to the gods. Far apart we live in the wash of the waves, the outermost of men, and no other mortals are conversant with us. Nay, but this man is some helpless one come hither in his wanderings, whom now we must kindly entreat, for all strangers and beggars are from Zeus, and a little gift is dear. So, my maidens, give the stranger meat and drink, and bathe him in the river, where withal is a shelter from the winds.'

So she spake, but they had halted and called each to the other, and they brought Odysseus to the sheltered place, and made him sit down, as Nausicaa bade them, the daughter of Alcinous, high of heart. Beside him they laid a mantle, and a doublet for raiment, and gave him soft olive oil in the golden cruse, and bade him wash in the streams of the river. Then goodly Odysseus spake among the maidens, saying: 'I pray you stand thus apart, while I myself wash the brine from my shoulders, and anoint me with olive oil, for truly oil is long a stranger to my skin. But in your sight I will not bathe, for I am ashamed to make me naked in the company of fair-tressed maidens.'

Then they went apart and told all to their lady. But with the river water the goodly Odysseus washed from his skin the salt scurf that covered his back and broad shoulders, and from his head he wiped the crusted brine of the barren sea. But when he had washed his whole body, and anointed him with olive oil, and had clad himself in the raiment that the unwedded maiden gave him, then Athene, the daughter of Zeus, made him greater and more mighty to behold, and from his head caused deep curling locks to flow, like the hyacinth flower. And as when some skilful man overlays gold upon silver—one that Hephaestus and Pallas Athene have taught all manner of craft, and full of grace in his handiwork—even so did Athene shed grace about his head and shoulders.

Then to the shore of the sea went Odysseus apart, and sat down, glowing in beauty and grace, and the princess marvelled at him, and spake among her fair-tressed maidens, saying:

'Listen, my white armed maidens, and I will say somewhat. Not without the will of all the gods who hold Olympus hath this man come among the godlike Phaeacians. Erewhile he seemed to me uncomely, but now he is like the gods that keep the wide heaven. Would that such an one might be called my husband, dwelling here, and that it might please him here to abide! But come, my maidens, give the stranger meat and drink.'

Thus she spake, and they gave ready ear and hearkened, and set beside Odysseus meat and drink, and the steadfast goodly Odysseus did eat and drink eagerly, for it was long since he had tasted food.

Now Nausicaa of the white arms had another thought. She folded the raiment and stored it in the goodly wain, and yoked the mules strong of hoof, and herself climbed into the car. Then she called on Odysseus, and spake and hailed him: 'Up now, stranger, and rouse thee to go to the city, that I may convey thee to the house of my wise father, where, I promise thee, thou shalt get knowledge of all the noblest of the Phaeacians. But do thou even as I tell thee, and thou seemest a discreet man enough. So long as we are passing along the fields and farms of men, do thou fare quickly with the maidens behind the mules and the chariot, and I will lead the way. But when we set foot within the city,—whereby goes a high wall with towers, and there is a fair haven on either side of the town, and narrow is the entrance, and curved ships are drawn up on either hand of the mole, for all the folk have stations for their vessels, each man one for himself. And there is the place of assembly about the goodly temple of Poseidon, furnished with heavy stones, deep bedded in the earth. There men look to the gear of the black ships, hawsers and sails, and there they fine down the oars. For the Phaeacians care not for bow nor quiver, but for masts, and oars of ships, and gallant barques, wherein rejoicing they cross the grey sea. Their ungracious speech it is that I would avoid, lest some man afterward rebuke me, and there are but too many insolent folk among the people. And some one of the baser sort might meet me and say: "Who is this that goes with Nausicaa, this tall and goodly stranger? Where found she him? Her huband he will be, her very own. Either she has taken in some ship-wrecked wanderer of strange men,—for no men dwell near us; or some god has come in answer to her instant prayer; from heaven has he descended, and will have her to wife for evermore. Better so, if herself she has ranged abroad and found a lord from a strange land, for verily she holds in no regard the Phaeacians here in this country, the many men and noble who are her wooers." So will they speak, and this would turn to my reproach. Yea, and I myself would think it blame of another maiden who did such things in despite of her friends, her father and mother being still alive, and was conversant with men before the day of open wedlock. But, stranger, heed well what I say, that as soon as may be thou mayest gain at my father's hands an escort and a safe return. Thou shalt find a fair grove of Athene, a popular grove near the road, and a spring wells forth therein, and a meadow lies all around. There is my father's demesne, and his fruitful close, within the sound of a man's shout from the city. Sit thee down there and wait until such time as we may have come into the city, and reached the house of my father. But when thou deemest that we are got to the palace, then go up to the city of the Phaeacians, and ask for the house of my father Alcinous, high of heart. It is easily known, and a young child could be thy guide, for nowise like it are builded the houses of the Phaeacians, so goodly is the palace of the hero Alcinous. But when thou art within the shadow of the halls and the court, pass quickly through the great chamber, till thou comest to my mother, who sits at the hearth in the light of the fire, weaving yarn of sea-purple stain, a wonder to behold. Her chair is leaned against a pillar, and her maidens sit behind her. And there my father's throne leans close to hers, wherein he sits and drinks his wine, like an immortal. Pass thou by him, and cast thy hands about my mother's knees, that thou mayest see quickly and with joy the day of thy returning, even if thou art from a very far country. If but her heart be kindly disposed toward thee, then is there hope that thou shalt see thy friends, and come to thy well-builded house, and to thine own country.'

She spake, and smote the mules with the shining whip, and quickly they left behind them the streams of the river. And well they trotted and well they paced, and she took heed to drive in such wise that the maidens and Odysseus might follow on foot, and cunningly she plied the lash. Then the sun set, and they came to the famous grove, the sacred place of Athene; so there the goodly Odysseus sat him down. Then straightway he prayed to the daughter of mighty Zeus: 'Listen to me, child of Zeus, lord of the aegis, unwearied maiden; hear me even now, since before thou heardest not when I was smitten on the sea, when the renowned Earth-shaker smote me. Grant me to come to the Phaeacians as one dear, and worthy of pity.'

So he spake in prayer, and Pallas Athene heard him; but she did not yet appear to him face to face, for she had regard unto her father's brother, who furiously raged against the godlike Odysseus till he should come to his own country.

BOOK VII

Odysseus being received at the house of the king Alcinous, the queen after supper, taking notice of his garments, gives him occasion to relate his passage thither on the raft. Alcinous promises him a convoy for the morrow.

So he prayed there, the steadfast goodly Odysseus, while the two strong mules bare the princess to the town. And when she had now come to the famous palace of her father, she halted at the gateway, and round her gathered her brothers, men like to the immortals, and they loosed the mules from under the car, and carried the raiment within. But the maiden betook her to her chamber; and an aged dame from Aperaea kindled the fire for her, Eurymedusa, the handmaid of the chamber, whom the curved ships upon a time had brought from Aperaea; and men chose her as a prize for Alcinous, seeing that he bare rule over all the Phaeacians, and the people hearkened to him as to a god. She waited on the white-armed Nausicaa in the palace halls; she was wont to kindle the fire and prepare the supper in the inner chamber.

At that same hour Odesseus roused him to go to the city, and Athene shed a deep mist about Odysseus for the favour that she bare him, lest any of the Phaeacians, high of heart, should meet him and mock him in sharp speech, and ask him who he was. But when he was now about to enter the pleasant city, then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, met him, in the fashion of a young maiden carrying a pitcher, and she stood over against him, and goodly Odysseus inquired of her:

'My child, couldst thou not lead me to the palace of the lord Alcinous, who bears sway among this people? Lo, I am come here, a stranger travel-worn from afar, from a distant land; wherefore of the folk who possess this city and country I know not any man.'

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, answered him saying: 'Yea now, father and stranger, I will show thee the house that thou bidst me declare, for it lies near the palace of my noble father; behold, be silent as thou goest, and I will lead the way. And look on no man, nor question any. For these men do not gladly suffer strangers, nor lovingly entreat whoso cometh from a strange land. They trust to the speed of their swift ships, wherewith they cross the great gulf, for the Earth-shaker hath vouchsafed them this power. Their ships are swift as the flight of a bird, or as a thought.'

Therewith Pallas Athene led the way swiftly, and he followed hard in the footsteps of the goddess. And it came to pass that the Phaeacians, mariners renowned, marked him not as he went down the city through their midst, for the fair-tressed Athene suffered it not, that awful goddess, who shed a wondrous mist about him, for the favour that she bare him in her heart. And Odysseus marvelled at the havens and the gallant ships, yea and the places of assembly of the heroes, and the long high walls crowned with palisades, a marvel to behold. But when they had now come to the famous palace of the king, the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, spake first and said:

'Lo, here, father and stranger, is the house that thou wouldst have me show thee: and thou shalt find kings at the feast, the fosterlings of Zeus; enter then, and fear not in thine heart, for the dauntless man is the best in every adventure, even though he come from a strange land. Thou shalt find the queen first in the halls: Arete is the name whereby men call her, and she came even of those that begat the king Alcinous. First Nausithous was son of Poseidon, the Earth-shaker, and of Periboea, the comeliest of women, youngest daughter of great-hearted Eurymedon, who once was king among the haughty Giants. Howbeit, he destroyed his infatuate people, and was himself destroyed: but Poseidon lay with Periboea and begat a son, proud Nausithous, who sometime was prince among the Phaeacians; and Nausithous begat Rhexenor and Alcinous. While Rhexenor had as yet no son, Apollo of the silver bow smote him, a groom new wed, leaving in his halls one only child Arete; and Alcinous took her to wife, and honoured her as no other woman in the world is honoured, of all that now-a-days keep house under the hand of their lords. Thus she hath, and hath ever had, all worship heartily from her dear children and from her lord Alcinous and from all the folk, who look on her as on a goddess, and greet her with reverend speech, when she goes about the town. Yea, for she too hath no lack of understanding. To whomso she shows favour, even if they be men, she ends their feuds. If but her heart be kindly disposed to thee, then is there good hope that thou mayest see thy friends, and come to thy high-roofed home and thine own country.'

Therewith grey-eyed Athene departed over the unharvested seas, and left pleasant Scheria, and came to Marathon and wide-wayed Athens, and entered the good house of Erechtheus. Meanwhile Odysseus went to the famous palace of Alcinous, and his heart was full of many thoughts as he stood there or ever he had reached the threshold of bronze. For there was a gleam as it were of sun or moon through the high-roofed hall of great-hearted Alcinous. Brazen were the walls which ran this way and that from the threshold to the inmost chamber, and round them was a frieze of blue, and golden were the doors that closed in the good house. Silver were the door-posts that were set on the brazen threshold, and silver the lintel thereupon, and the hook of the door was of gold. And on either side stood golden hounds and silver, which Hephaestus wrought by his cunning, to guard the palace of great-hearted Alcinous, being free from death and age all their days. And within were seats arrayed against the wall this way and that, from the threshold even to the inmost chamber, and thereon were spread light coverings finely woven, the handiwork of women. There the Phaeacian chieftains were wont to sit eating and drinking, for they had continual store. Yea, and there were youths fashioned in gold, standing on firm-set bases, with flaming torches in their hands, giving light through the night to the feasters in the palace. And he had fifty handmaids in the house, and some grind the yellow grain on the millstone, and others weave webs and turn the yarn as they sit, restless as the leaves of the tall poplar tree: and the soft olive oil drops off that linen, so closely is it woven. For as the Phaeacian men are skilled beyond all others in driving a swift ship upon the deep, even so are the women the most cunning at the loom, for Athene hath given them notable wisdom in all fair handiwork and cunning wit. And without the courtyard hard by the door is a great garden, of four ploughgates, and a hedge runs round on either side. And there grow tall trees blossoming, pear-trees and pomegranates and apple-trees with bright fruit, and sweet figs, and olives in their bloom. The fruit of these trees never perisheth neither faileth, winter or summer, enduring through all the year. Evermore the West Wind blowing brings some fruits to birth and ripens others. Pear upon pear waxes old, and apple on apple, yea and cluster ripens upon cluster of the grape, and fig upon fig. There too hath he a fruitful vineyard planted, whereof the one part is being dried by the heat, a sunny plot on level ground, while other grapes men are gathering, and yet others they are treading in the winepress. In the foremost row are unripe grapes that cast the blossoms, and others there be that are growing black to vintaging. There too, skirting the furthest line, are all manner of garden beds, planted trimly, that are perpetually fresh, and therein are two fountains of water, whereof one scatters his streams all about the garden, and the other runs over against it beneath the threshold of the courtyard, and issues by the lofty house, and thence did the townsfolk draw water. These were the splendid gifts of the gods in the palace of Alcinous.

There the steadfast goodly Odysseus stood and gazed. But when he had gazed at all and wondered, he passed quickly over the threshold within the house. And he found the captains and the counsellors of the Phaeacians pouring forth wine to the keen-sighted god, the slayer of Argos; for to him they poured the last cup when they were minded to take rest. Now the steadfast goodly Odysseus went through the house, clad in a thick mist, which Athene shed around him, till he came to Arete and the king Alcinous. And Odysseus cast his hands about the knees of Arete, and then it was that the wondrous mist melted from off him, and a silence fell on them that were within the house at the sight of him, and they marvelled as they beheld him. Then Odysseus began his prayer:

'Arete, daughter of god-like Rhexenor, after many toils am I come to thy husband and to thy knees and to these guests, and may the gods vouchsafe them a happy life, and may each one leave to his children after him his substance in his halls and whatever dues of honour the people have rendered unto him. But speed, I pray you, my parting right quickly, that I may come to mine own country, for already too long do I suffer affliction far from my friends.'

Therewith he sat him down by the hearth in the ashes at the fire, and behold, a dead silence fell on all. And at the last the ancient lord Echeneus spake among them, an elder of the Phaeacians, excellent in speech and skilled in much wisdom of old time. With good will he made harangue and spake among them:

'Alcinous, this truly is not the more seemly way, nor is it fitting that the stranger should sit upon the ground in the ashes by the hearth, while these men refrain them, waiting thy word. Nay come, bid the stranger arise, and set him on a chair inlaid with silver, and command the henchmen to mix the wine, that we may pour forth likewise before Zeus, whose joy is in the thunder, who attendeth upon reverend suppliants. And let the housewife give supper to the stranger out of such stores as be within.'

Now when the mighty king Alcinous heard this saying, he took Odysseus, the wise and crafty, by the hand, and raised him from the hearth, and set him on a shining chair, whence he bade his son give place, valiant Laodamas, who sat next him and was his dearest. And a handmaid bare water for the hands in a goodly golden ewer, and poured it forth over a silver basin to wash withal, and drew to his side a polished table. And a grave dame bare wheaten bread and set it by him and laid upon the board many dainties, giving freely of such things as she had by her. So the steadfast goodly Odysseus did eat and drink; and then the mighty king Alcinous spake unto the henchman:

'Pontonous, mix the bowl and serve out the wine to all in the hall, that we may pour forth likewise before Zeus, whose joy is in the thunder, who attendeth upon reverend suppliants.'

So spake he, and Pontonous mixed the honey-hearted wine, and served it out to all, when he had poured for libation into each cup in turn. But when they had poured forth and had drunken to their heart's content, Alcinous made harangue and spake among them:

'Hear me, ye captains and counsellors of the Phaeacians, that I may speak as my spirit bids me. Now that the feast is over, go ye home and lie down to rest; and in the morning we will call yet more elders together, and entertain the stranger in the halls and do fair sacrifice to the gods, and thereafter we will likewise bethink us of the convoy, that so without pain or grief yonder stranger may by our convoy reach his own country speedily and with joy, even though he be from very far away. So shall he suffer no hurt or harm in mid passage, ere he set foot on his own land; but thereafter he shall endure such things as Fate and the stern spinning women drew off the spindles for him at his birth when his mother bare him. But if he is some deathless god come down from heaven, then is this some new device wherewith the gods encompass us. For always heretofore the gods appear manifest amongst us, whensoever we offer glorious hecatombs, and they feast by our side, sitting at the same board; yea, and even if a wayfarer going all alone has met with them, they use no disguise, since we are near of kin to them, even as are the Cyclôpes and the wild tribes of the Giants.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered him, saying: 'Alcinous, that thought be far from thee! for I bear no likeness either in form nor fashion to the deathless gods, who keep wide heaven, but to men that die. Whomsoever ye know of human kind the heaviest laden with sorrow, to them might I liken myself in my griefs. Yea, and I might tell of yet other woes, even the long tale of toil that by the gods' will I endured. But as for me, suffer me to sup, afflicted as I am; for nought is there more shameless than a ravening belly, which biddeth a man perforce be mindful of him, though one be worn and sorrowful in spirit, even as I have sorrow of heart; yet evermore he biddeth me eat and drink and maketh me utterly to forget all my sufferings, and commandeth me to take my fill. But do ye bestir you at the breaking of the day, that so ye may set me, hapless as I am, upon my country's soil, albeit after much suffering. Ah, and may life leave me when I have had sight of mine own possessions, my thralls, and my dwelling that is great and high!'

So spake he, and they all assented thereto, and bade send the stranger on his way, for that he had spoken aright. Now when they had poured forth and had drunken to their hearts' content, they went each one to his house to lay them to rest. But goodly Odysseus was left behind in the hall, and by him sat Arete and godlike Alcinous; and the maids cleared away the furniture of the feast; and white-armed Arete first spake among them. For she knew the mantle and the doublet, when she saw the goodly raiment that she herself had wrought with the women her handmaids. So she uttered her voice and spake to him winged words:

'Sir, I am bold to ask thee first of this. Who art thou of the sons of men, and whence? Who gave thee this raiment? Didst thou not say indeed that thou camest hither wandering over the deep?'

Then Odysseus of many counsels answered her, and said: ''Tis hard, O queen, to tell my griefs from end to end, for that the gods of heaven have given me griefs in plenty. But this will I declare to thee, whereof thou dost question and inquire. There is an isle, Ogygia, that lies far off in the sea; there dwells the daughter of Atlas, crafty Calypso, of the braided tresses, an awful goddess, nor is any either of gods or mortals conversant with her. Howbeit, some god brought me to her hearth, wretched man that I am, all alone, for that Zeus with white bolt crushed my swift ship and cleft it in the midst of the wine-dark deep. There all the rest of my good company was lost, but I clung with fast embrace about the keel of the curved ship, and so was I borne for nine whole days. And on the tenth dark night the gods brought me nigh the isle Ogygia, where Calypso of the braided tresses dwells, an awful goddess. She took me in, and with all care she cherished me and gave me sustenance, and said that she would make me to know not death nor age for all my days; but never did she win my heart within me. There I abode for seven years continually, and watered with my tears the imperishable raiment that Calypso gave me. But when the eighth year came round in his course, then at last she urged and bade me to be gone, by reason of a message from Zeus, or it may be that her own mind was turned. So she sent me forth on a well-bound raft, and gave me plenteous store, bread and sweet wine, and she clad me in imperishable raiment, and sent forth a warm and gentle wind to blow. For ten days and seven I sailed, traversing the deep, and on the eighteenth day the shadowy hills of your land showed in sight, and my heart was glad,—wretched that I was—for surely I was still to be the mate of much sorrow. For Poseidon, shaker of the earth, stirred up the same, who roused against me the winds and stopped my way, and made a wondrous sea to swell, nor did the wave suffer me to be borne upon my raft, as I made ceaseless moan. Thus the storm winds shattered the raft, but as for me I cleft my way through the gulf yonder, till the wind bare and the water brought me nigh your coast. Then as I strove to land upon the shore, the wave had overwhelmed me, dashing me against the great rocks and a desolate place, but at length I gave way and swam back, till I came to the river, where the place seemed best in mine eyes, smooth of rocks, and withal there was a shelter from the wind. And as I came out I sank down, gathering to me my spirit, and immortal night came on. Then I gat me forth and away from the heaven-fed river, and laid me to sleep in the bushes and strewed leaves about me, and the god shed over me infinite sleep. There among the leaves I slept, stricken at heart, all the night long, even till the morning and mid-day. And the sun sank when sweet sleep let me free. And I was aware of the company of thy daughter disporting them upon the sand, and there was she in the midst of them like unto the goddesses. To her I made my supplication, and she showed no lack of a good understanding, behaving so as thou couldst not hope for in chancing upon one so young; for the younger folk lack wisdom always. She gave me bread enough and red wine, and let wash me in the river and bestowed on me these garments. Herein, albeit in sore distress, have I told thee all the truth.'

And Alcinous answered again, and spake saying: 'Sir, surely this was no right thought of my daughter, in that she brought thee not to our house with the women her handmaids, though thou didst first entreat her grace.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered, and said unto him: 'My lord, chide not, I pray thee, for this the blameless maiden. For indeed she bade me follow with her company, but I would not for fear and very shame, lest perchance thine heart might be clouded at the sight; for a jealous race upon the earth are we, the tribes of men.'

And Alcinous answered yet again, and spake saying: 'Sir, my heart within me is not of such temper as to have been wroth without a cause: due measure in all things is best. Would to father Zeus, and Athene, and Apollo, would that so goodly a man as thou art, and like-minded with me, thou wouldst wed my daughter, and be called my son, here abiding: so would I give thee house and wealth, if thou wouldst stay of thine own will: but against thy will shall none of the Phaeacians keep thee: never be this well-pleasing in the eyes of father Zeus! And now I ordain an escort for thee on a certain day, that thou mayst surely know, and that day the morrow. Then shalt thou lay thee down overcome by sleep, and they the while shall smite the calm waters, till thou come to thy country and thy house, and whatsoever place is dear to thee, even though it be much farther than Euboea, which certain of our men say is the farthest of lands, they who saw it, when they carried Rhadamanthus, of the fair hair, to visit Tityos, son of Gaia. Even thither they went, and accomplished the journey on the self-same day and won home again, and were not weary. And now shalt thou know for thyself how far my ships are the best, and how my young men excel at tossing the salt water with the oar-blade.'

So spake he, and the steadfast goodly Odysseus rejoiced; and then he uttered a word in prayer, and called aloud to Zeus: 'Father Zeus, oh that Alcinous may fulfil all that he hath said, so may his fame never be quenched upon the earth, the grain-giver, and I should come to mine own land!'

Thus they spake one to the other. And white-armed Arete bade her handmaids set out bedsteads beneath the corridor, and cast fair purple blankets over them, and spread coverlets above, and thereon lay thick mantles to be a clothing over all. So they went from the hall with torch in hand. But when they had busied them and spread the good bedstead, they stood by Odysseus and called unto him, saying:

'Up now, stranger, and get thee to sleep, thy bed is made.'

So spake they, and it seemed to him that rest was wondrous good. So he slept there, the steadfast goodly Odysseus, on the jointed bedstead, beneath the echoing corridor. But Alcinous laid him down in the innermost chamber of the high house, and by him the lady his wife arrayed bedstead and bedding.

BOOK VIII

The next day's entertainment of Odysseus, where he sees them contend in wrestling and other exercises, and upon provocation took up a greater stone than that which they were throwing, and overthrew them all. Alcinous and the lords give him presents. And how the king asked his name, his country, and his adventures.

Now when early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, then the mighty king Alcinous gat him up from his bed; and Odysseus, of the seed of Zeus, likewise uprose, the waster of cities. And the mighty king Alcinous led the way to the assembly place of the Phaeacians, which they had stablished hard by the ships. So when they had come thither, and sat them down on the polished stones close by each other, Pallas Athene went on her way through the town, in the semblance of the herald of wise Alcinous, devising a return for the great-hearted Odysseus. Then standing by each man she spake, saying:

'Hither now get ye to the assembly, ye captains and counsellors of the Phaeacians, that ye may learn concerning the stranger, who hath lately come to the palace of wise Alcinous, in his wanderings over the deep, and his form is like the deathless gods.'

Therewith she aroused the spirit and desire of each one, and speedily the meeting-places and seats were filled with men that came to the gathering: yea, and many an one marvelled at the sight of the wise son of Laertes, for wondrous was the grace Athene poured upon his head and shoulders, and she made him greater and more mighty to behold, that he might win love and worship and honour among all the Phaeacians, and that he might accomplish many feats, wherein the Phaeacians made trial of Odysseus. Now when they were gathered and come together, Alcinous made harangue and spake among them:

'Hearken, ye captains and counsellors of the Phaeacians, and I will say that which my spirit within me bids me utter. This stranger, I know not who he is, hath come to my house in his wandering, whether from the men of the dawning or the westward, and he presses for a convoy, and prays that it be assured to him. So let us, as in time past, speed on the convoy. For never, nay never, doth any man who cometh to my house, abide here long in sorrow for want of help upon his way. Nay, come let us draw down a black ship to the fair salt sea, for her first voyage, and let them choose fifty and two noble youths throughout the township, who have been proved heretofore the best. And when ye have made fast the oars upon the benches, step all ashore, and thereafter come to our house, and quickly fall to feasting; and I will make good provision for all. To the noble youths I give this commandment; but ye others, sceptred kings, come to my fair dwelling, that we may entertain the stranger in the halls, and let no man make excuse. Moreover, bid hither the divine minstrel, Demodocus, for the god hath given minstrelsy to him as to none other, to make men glad in what way soever his spirit stirs him to sing.'

He spake and led the way, and the sceptred kings accompanied him, while the henchman went for the divine minstrel. And chosen youths, fifty and two, departed at his command, to the shore of the unharvested sea. But after they had gone down to the ship and to the sea, first of all they drew the ship down to the deep water, and placed the mast and sails in the black ship, and fixed the oars in leathern loops, all orderly, and spread forth the white sails. And they moored her high out in the shore water, and thereafter went on their way to the great palace of the wise Alcinous. Now the corridors and the courts and the rooms were thronged with men that came to the gathering, for there were many, young and old. Then Alcinous sacrificed twelve sheep among them, and eight boars with flashing tusks, and two oxen with trailing feet. These they flayed and made ready, and dressed a goodly feast.

Then the henchmen drew near, leading with him the beloved minstrel, whom the muse loved dearly, and she gave him both good and evil; of his sight she reft him, but granted him sweet song. Then Pontonous, the henchman, set for him a high chair inlaid with silver, in the midst of the guests, leaning it against the tall pillar, and he hung the loud lyre on a pin, close above his head, and showed him how to lay his hands on it. And close by him he placed a basket, and a fair table, and a goblet of wine by his side, to drink when his spirit bade him. So they stretched forth their hands upon the good cheer spread before them. But after they had put from them the desire for meat and drink, the muse stirred the minstrel to sing the songs of famous men, even that lay whereof the fame had then reached the wide heaven, namely, the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles, son of Peleus; how once on a time they contended in fierce words at a rich festival of the gods, but Agamemnon, king of men, was inly glad when the noblest of the Achaeans fell at variance. For so Phoebus Apollo in his soothsaying had told him that it must be, in goodly Pytho, what time he crossed the threshold of stone, to seek to the oracle. For in those days the first wave of woe was rolling on Trojans and Danaans through the counsel of great Zeus.

This song it was that the famous minstrel sang; but Odysseus caught his great purple cloak with his stalwart hands, and drew it down over his head, and hid his comely face, for he was ashamed to shed tears beneath his brows in presence of the Phaeacians. Yea, and oft as the divine minstrel paused in his song, Odysseus would wipe away the tears and draw the cloak from off his head, and take the double goblet and pour forth before the gods. But whensoever he began again, and the chiefs of the Phaeacians stirred him to sing, in delight at the lay, again would Odysseus cover up his head and make moan. Now none of all the company marked him weeping, but Alcinous alone noted it and was ware thereof as he sat by him and heard him groaning heavily. And presently he spake among the Phaeacians, masters of the oar:

'Hearken, ye captains and counsellors of the Phaeacians, now have our souls been satisfied with the good feast, and with the lyre, which is the mate of the rich banquet. Let us go forth anon, and make trial of divers games, that the stranger may tell his friends, when home he returneth, how greatly we excel all men in boxing, and wrestling, and leaping, and speed of foot.'

He spake, and led the way, and they went with him. And the henchman hung the loud lyre on the pin, and took the hand of Demodocus, and led him forth from the hall, and guided him by the same way, whereby those others, the chiefs of the Phaeacians, had gone to gaze upon the games. So they went on their way to the place of assembly, and with them a great company innumerable; and many a noble youth stood up to play. There rose Acroneus, and Ocyalus, and Elatreus, and Nauteus, and Prymneus, and Anchialus, and Eretmeus, and Ponteus, and Proreus, Thoon, and Anabesineus, and Amphialus, son of Polyneus, son of Tekton, and likewise Euryalus, the peer of murderous Ares, the son of Naubolus, who in face and form was goodliest of all the Phaeacians next to noble Laodamas. And there stood up the three sons of noble Alcinous Laodamas and Halius, and god-like Clytoneus. And behold, these all first tried the issue in the foot race. From the very start they strained at utmost speed: and all together they flew forward swiftly, raising the dust along the plain. And noble Clytoneus was far the swiftest of them all in running, and by the length of the furrow that mules cleave in a fallow field,[1] so far did he shoot to the front, and came to the crowd by the lists, while those other were left behind. Then they made trial of strong wrestling, and here in turn Euryalus excelled all the best. And in leaping Amphialus was far the foremost, and Elatreus in weight-throwing, and in boxing Laodamas, the good son of Alcinous. Now when they had all taken their pleasure in the games, Laodamas, son of Alcinous, spake among them:

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[1] The distance here indicated seems to be that which the mule goes in ploughing, without pausing to take breath.

'Come, my friends, let us ask the stranger whether he is skilled or practised in any sport. Ill fashioned, at least, he is not in his thighs and sinewy legs and hands withal, and his stalwart neck and mighty strength: yea and he lacks not youth, but is crushed by many troubles. For I tell thee there is nought else worse than the sea to confound a man, how hardy soever he may be.'

And Euryalus in turn made answer, and said: 'Laodamas, verily thou hast spoken this word in season. Go now thyself and challenge him, and declare thy saying.'

Now when the good son of Alcinous heard this, he went and stood in the midst, and spake unto Odysseus: 'Come, do thou too, father and stranger, try thy skill in the sports, if haply thou art practised in any; and thou art like to have knowledge of games, for there is no greater glory for a man while yet he lives, than that which he achieves by hand and foot. Come, then, make essay, and cast away care from thy soul: thy journey shall not now be long delayed; lo, thy ship is even now drawn down to the sea, and the men of thy company are ready.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered him, saying: 'Laodamas, wherefore do ye mock me, requiring this thing of me? Sorrow is far nearer my heart than sports, for much have I endured and laboured sorely in time past, and now I sit in this your gathering, craving my return, and making my prayer to the king and all the people.'

And Euryalus answered, and rebuked him to his face: 'No truly, stranger, nor do I think thee at all like one that is skilled in games, whereof there are many young men, rather art thou such an one as comes and goes in a benched ship, a master of sailors that are merchantmen, one with a memory for his freight, or that hath the charge of a cargo homeward bound, and of greedily gotten gains; thou seemest not a man of thy hands.'

Then Odysseus of many counsels looked askance and spake unto him: 'Stranger, thou hast not spoken well; thou art like a man presumptuous. So true it is that the gods do not give every gracious gift to all, neither shapeliness, nor wisdom, nor skilled speech. For one man is feebler than another in presence, yet the god crowns his words with beauty, and men behold him and rejoice, and his speech runs surely on his way with a sweet modesty, and he shines forth among the gathering of his people, and as he passes through the town men gaze on him as a god. Another again is like the deathless gods for beauty, but his words have no crown of grace about them; even as thou art in comeliness pre-eminent, nor could a god himself fashion thee for the better, but in wit thou art a weakling. Yea, thou hast stirred my spirit in my breast by speaking thus amiss. I am not all unversed in sports, as thy words go, but methinks I was among the foremost while as yet I trusted in my youth and my hands, but now am I holden in misery and pains: for I have endured much in passing through the wars of men and the grievous waves of the sea. Yet even so, for all my affliction, I will essay the games, for thy word hath bitten to the quick, and thou hast roused me with thy saying.'

He spake, and clad even as he was in his mantle leaped to his feet, and caught up a weight larger than the rest, a huge weight heavier far than those wherewith the Phaeacians contended in casting. With one whirl he sent it from his stout hand, and the stone flew hurtling: and the Phaeacians, of the long oars, those mariners renowned, crouched to earth beneath the rushing of the stone. Beyond all the marks it flew, so lightly it sped from his hand, and Athene in the fashion of a man marked the place, and spake and hailed him:

'Yea, even a blind man, stranger, might discern that token if he groped for it, for it is in no wise lost among the throng of the others, but is far the first; for this bout then take heart: not one of the Phaeacians shall attain thereunto or overpass it.'

So spake she; and the steadfast goodly Odysseus rejoiced and was glad, for that he saw a true friend in the lists. Then with a lighter heart he spake amid the Phaeacians:

'Now reach ye this throw, young men, if ye may; and soon, methinks, will I cast another after it, as far or yet further. And whomsoever of the rest his heart and spirit stir thereto, hither let him come and try the issue with me, in boxing or in wrestling or even in the foot race, I care not which, for ye have greatly angered me: let any of all the Phaeacians come save Laodamas alone, for he is mine host: who would strive with one that entreated him kindly? Witless and worthless is the man, whoso challengeth his host that receiveth him in a strange land, he doth but maim his own estate. But for the rest, I refuse none and hold none lightly, but I fain would know and prove them face to face. For I am no weakling in all sports, even in the feats of men. I know well how to handle the polished bow, and ever the first would I be to shoot and smite my man in the press of foes, even though many of my company stood by, and were aiming at the enemy. Alone Philoctetes in the Trojan land surpassed me with the bow in our Achaean archery. But I avow myself far more excellent than all besides, of the mortals that are now upon the earth and live by bread. Yet with the men of old time I would not match me, neither with Heracles nor with Eurytus of Oechalia, who contended even with the deathless gods for the prize of archery. Wherefore the great Eurytus perished all too soon, nor did old age come on him in his halls, for Apollo slew him in his wrath, seeing that he challenged him to shoot a match. And with the spear I can throw further than any other man can shoot an arrow. Only I doubt that in the foot race some of the Phaeacians may outstrip me, for I have been shamefully broken in many waters, seeing that there was no continual sustenance on board; wherefore my knees are loosened.'

So spake he and all kept silence; and Alcinous alone answered him, saying:

'Stranger, forasmuch as these thy words are not ill-taken in our gathering, but thou wouldest fain show forth the valour which keeps thee company, being angry that yonder man stood by thee in the lists, and taunted thee, in such sort as no mortal would speak lightly of thine excellence, who had knowledge of sound words; nay now, mark my speech; so shalt thou have somewhat to tell another hero, when with thy wife and children thou suppest in thy halls, and recallest our prowess, what deeds Zeus bestoweth even upon us from our fathers' days even until now. For we are no perfect boxers, nor wrestlers, but speedy runners, and the best of seamen; and dear to us ever is the banquet, and the harp, and the dance, and changes of raiment, and the warm bath, and love, and sleep. Lo, now arise, ye dancers of the Phaeacians, the best in the land, and make sport, that so the stranger may tell his friends, when he returneth home, how far we surpass all men besides in seamanship, and speed of foot, and in the dance and song. And let one go quickly, and fetch for Demodocus the loud lyre which is lying somewhere in our halls.'

So spake Alcinous the godlike, and the henchman rose to bear the hollow lyre from the king's palace. Then stood up nine chosen men in all, the judges of the people, who were wont to order all things in the lists aright. So they levelled the place for the dance, and made a fair ring and a wide. And the henchman drew near bearing the loud lyre to Demodocus, who gat him into the midst, and round him stood boys in their first bloom, skilled in the dance, and they smote the good floor with their feet. And Odysseus gazed at the twinklings of the feet, and marvelled in spirit.

Now as the minstrel touched the lyre, he lifted up his voice in sweet song, and he sang of the love of Ares and Aphrodite, of the fair crown, how at the first they lay together in the house of Hephaestus privily; and Ares gave her many gifts, and dishonoured the marriage bed of the lord Hephaestus. And anon there came to him one to report the thing, even Helios, that had seen them at their pastime. Now when Hephaestus heard the bitter tidings, he went his way to the forge, devising evil in the deep of his heart, and set the great anvil on the stithy, and wrought fetters that none might snap or loosen, that the lovers might there unmoveably remain. Now when he had forged the crafty net in his anger against Ares, he went on his way to the chamber where the marriage bed was set out, and strewed his snares all about the posts of the bed, and many too were hung aloft from the main beam, subtle as spiders' webs, so that none might see them, even of the blessed gods: so cunningly were they forged. Now after he had done winding the snare about the bed, he made as though he would go to Lemnos, that stablished castle, and this was far the dearest of all lands in his sight. But Ares of the golden rein kept no blind watch, what time he saw Hephaestus, the famed craftsman, depart afar. So he went on his way to the house of renowned Hephaestus, eager for the love of crowned Cytherea. Now she was but newly come from her sire, the mighty Cronion, and as it chanced had sat her down; and Ares entered the house, and clasped her hand, and spake, and hailed her:

'Come, my beloved, let us to bed, and take our pleasure of love, for Hephaestus is no longer among his own people; methinks he is already gone to Lemnos, to the Sintians, men of savage speech.'

So spake he, and a glad thing it seemed to her to lie with him. So they twain went to the couch, and laid them to sleep, and around them clung the cunning bonds of skilled Hephaestus, so that they could not move nor raise a limb. Then at the last they knew it, when there was no way to flee. Now the famous god of the strong arms drew near to them, having turned him back ere he reached the land of Lemnos. For Helios had kept watch, and told him all. So heavy at heart he went his way to his house, and stood at the entering in of the gate, and wild rage gat hold of him, and he cried terribly, and shouted to all the gods:

'Father Zeus, and ye other blessed gods, that live for ever, come hither, that ye may see a mirthful thing and a cruel, for that Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, ever dishonours me by reason of my lameness, and sets her heart on Ares the destroyer, because he is fair and straight of limb, but as for me, feeble was I born. Howbeit, there is none to blame but my father and mother,—would they had never begotten me! But now shall ye see where these have gone up into my bed, and sleep together in love; and I am troubled at the sight. Yet, methinks, they will not care to lie thus even for a little while longer, despite their great love. Soon will they have no desire to sleep together, but the snare and the bond shall hold them, till her sire give back to me the gifts of wooing, one and all, those that I bestowed upon him for the hand of his shameless girl; for that his daughter is fair, but without discretion.'

So spake he; and lo, the gods gathered together to the house of the brazen floor. Poseidon came, the girdler of the earth, and Hermes came, the bringer of luck, and prince Apollo came, the archer. But the lady goddesses abode each within her house for shame. So the gods, the givers of good things, stood in the porch: and laughter unquenchable arose among the blessed gods, as they beheld the sleight of cunning Hephaestus. And thus would one speak, looking to his neighbor:

'Ill deed, ill speed! The slow catcheth the swift! Lo, how Hephaestus, slow as he is, hath overtaken Ares, albeit he is the swiftest of the gods that hold Olympus, by his craft hath he taken him despite his lameness; wherefore surely Ares oweth the fine of the adulterer.' Thus they spake one to the other. But the lord Apollo, son of Zeus, spake to Hermes:

'Hermes, son of Zeus, messenger and giver of good things, wouldst thou be fain, aye, pressed by strong bonds though it might be, to lie on the couch by golden Aphrodite?'

Then the messenger, the slayer of Argos, answered him: 'I would that this might be Apollo, my prince of archery! So might thrice as many bonds innumerable encompass me about, and all ye gods be looking on and all the goddesses, yet would I lie by golden Aphrodite.'

So spake he, and laughter rose among the deathless gods. Howbeit Poseidon laughed not, but was instant with Hephaestus, the renowned artificer, to loose the bonds of Ares: and he uttered his voice, and spake to him winged words:

'Loose him, I pray thee, and I promise even as thou biddest me, that he shall himself pay all fair forfeit in the presence of the deathless gods.'

Then the famous god of the strong arms answered him: 'Require not this of me, Poseidon, girdler of the earth. Evil are evil folk's pledges to hold. How could I keep thee bound among the deathless gods, if Ares were to depart, avoiding the debt and the bond?'

Then Poseidon answered him, shaker of the earth: 'Hephaestus even if Ares avoid the debt and flee away, I myself will pay thee all.'

Then the famous god of the strong arms answered him: 'It may not be that I should say thee nay, neither is it meet.'

Therewith the mighty Hephaestus loosed the bonds, and the twain, when they were freed from that strong bond, sprang up straightway, and departed, he to Thrace, but laughter-loving Aphrodite went to Paphos of Cyprus, where is her precinct and fragrant altar. There the Graces bathed and anointed her with oil imperishable, such as is laid upon the everlasting gods. And they clad her in lovely raiment, a wonder to see.

This was the song the famous minstrel sang; and Odysseus listened and was glad at heart, and likewise did the Phaeacians, of the long oars, those mariners renowned.

Then Alcinous bade Halius and Laodamas dance alone, for none ever contended with them. So when they had taken in their hands the goodly ball of purple hue, that cunning Polybus had wrought for them, the one would bend backwards, and throw it towards the shadowy clouds; and the other would leap upward from the earth, and catch it lightly in his turn, before his feet touched the ground. Now after they had made trial of throwing the ball straight up, the twain set to dance upon the bounteous earth, tossing the ball from hand to hand, and the other youths stood by the lists and beat time, and a great din uprose.

Then it was that goodly Odysseus spake unto Alcinous: ‘My lord Alcinous, most notable among all the people, thou didst boast thy dancers to be the best in the world, and lo, thy words are fulfilled; I wonder as I look on them.’

So spake he, and the mighty king Alcinous rejoiced and spake at once among the Phaeacians, masters of the oar:

‘Hearken ye, captains and counsellors of the Phaeacians, this stranger seems to me a wise man enough. Come then, let us give him a stranger’s gift, as is meet. Behold, there are twelve glorious princes who rule among this people and bear sway, and I myself am the thirteenth. Now each man among you bring a fresh robe and a doublet, and a talent of fine gold, and let us speedily carry all these gifts together, that the stranger may take them in his hands, and go to supper with a glad heart. As for Euryalus let him yield amends to the man himself with soft speech and with a gift, for his was no gentle saying.’

So spake he, and they all assented thereto, and would have it so. And each one sent forth his henchman to fetch his gift, and Euryalus answered the king and spake, saying:

‘My lord Alcinous, most notable among all the people, I will make atonement to thy guest according to thy word. I will give him a hanger all of bronze, with a silver hilt thereto, and a sheath of fresh-sawn ivory covers it about, and it shall be to him a thing of price.'

Therewith he puts into his hands the hanger dight with silver, and uttering his voice spake to him winged words: 'Hail, stranger and father; and if aught grievous hath been spoken, may the storm-winds soon snatch and bear it away. But may the gods grant thee to see thy wife and to come to thine own country, for all too long hast thou endured affliction away from thy friends.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered him saying: 'Thou too, my friend, all hail; and may the gods vouchsafe thee happiness, and mayst thou never miss this sword which thou hast given me, thou that with soft speech hast yielded me amends.'

He spake and hung about his shoulders the silver-studded sword. And the sun sank, and the noble gifts were brought him. Then the proud henchmen bare them to the palace of Alcinous, and the sons of noble Alcinous took the fair gifts, and set them by their reverend mother. And the mighty king Alcinous led the way, and they came in and sat them down on the high seats. And the mighty Alcinous spake unto Arete:

'Bring me hither, my lady, a choice coffer, the best thou hast, and thyself place therein a fresh robe and a doublet, and heat for our guest a cauldron on the fire, and warm water, that after the bath the stranger may see all the gifts duly arrayed which the noble Phaeacians bare hither, and that he may have joy in the feast, and in hearing the song of the minstrelsy. Also I will give him a beautiful golden chalice of mine own, that he may be mindful of me all the days of his life when he poureth the drink-offering to Zeus and to the other gods.'

So spake he, and Arete bade her handmaids to set a great cauldron on the fire with what speed they might. And they set the cauldron for the filling of the bath on the blazing fire, and poured water therein, and took faggots and kindled them beneath. So the fire began to circle round the belly of the cauldron, and the water waxed hot. Meanwhile Arete brought forth for her guest the beautiful coffer from the treasure chamber, and bestowed fair gifts therein, raiment and gold, which the Phaeacians gave him. And with her own hands she placed therein a robe and goodly doublet, and uttering her voice spake to him winged words:

'Do thou now look to the lid, and quickly tie the knot, lest any man spoil thy goods by the way, when presently thou fallest on sweet sleep travelling in thy black ship.'

Now when the steadfast goodly Odysseus heard this saying, forthwith he fixed on the lid, and quickly tied the curious knot, which the lady Circe on a time had taught him. Then straightway the housewife bade him go to the bath and bathe him; and he saw the warm water and was glad, for he was not wont to be so cared for, from the day that he left the house of fair-tressed Calypso, but all that while he had comfort continual as a god.

Now after the maids had bathed him and anointed him with olive oil, and had cast a fair mantle and a doublet upon him he stept forth from the bath, and went to be with the chiefs at their wine. And Nausicaa, dowered with beauty by the gods, stood by the doorpost of the well-builded hall, and marvelled at Odysseus, beholding him before her eyes, and she uttered her voice and spake to him winged words:

'Farewell, stranger, and even in thine own country bethink thee of me upon a time, for that to me first thou owest the ransom of life.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered her saying: 'Nausicaa, daughter of great-hearted Alcinous, yea, may Zeus, the thunderer, the lord of Here, grant me to reach my home and see the day of my returning; so would I, even there, do thee worship as to a god, all my days for evermore, for thou, lady, hast given me my life.'

He spake and sat him in the high seat by king Alcinous. And now they were serving out the portions and mixing the wine. Then the henchman drew nigh leading the sweet minstrel, Demodocus, that was had in honour of the people. So he set him in the midst of the feasters, and made him lean against a tall column. Then to the henchman spake Odysseus of many counsels, for he had cut off a portion of the chine of a white-toothed boar, whereon yet more was left, with rich fat on either side:

'Lo, henchman, take this mess, and hand it to Demodocus, that he may eat, and I will bid him hail, despite my sorrow. For minstrels from all men on earth get their meed of honour and worship; inasmuch as the muse teacheth them the paths of song, and loveth the tribe of minstrels.'

Thus he spake, and the henchman bare the mess, and set it upon the knees of the lord Demodocus, and he took it, and was glad at heart. Then they stretched forth their hands upon the good cheer set before them. Now after they had put from them the desire of meat and drink, then Odysseus of many counsels spake to Demodocus, saying:

'Demodocus, I praise thee far above all mortal men, whether it be the Muse, the daughter of Zeus, that taught thee, or even Apollo, for right duly dost thou chant the faring of the Achaeans, even all that they wrought and suffered, and all their travail, as if, methinks, thou hadst been present, or heard the tale from another. Come now, change thy strain, and sing of the fashioning of the horse of wood, which Epeius made by the aid of Athene, even the guileful thing, that goodly Odysseus led up into the citadel, when he had laden it with the men who wasted Ilios. If thou wilt indeed rehearse me this aright, so will I be thy witness among all men, how the god of his grace hath given thee the gift of wondrous song.'

So spake he, and the minstrel, being stirred by the god, began and showed forth his minstrelsy. He took up the tale where it tells how the Argives of the one part set fire to their huts, and went aboard their decked ships and sailed away, while those others, the fellowship of renowned Odysseus, were now seated in the assembly-place of the Trojans, all hidden in the horse, for the Trojans themselves had dragged him to the citadel. So the horse stood there, while seated all around him the people spake many things confusedly and three ways their counsel looked; either to cleave the hollow timber with the pitiless spear, or to drag it to the brow of the hill, and hurl it from the rocks, or to leave it as a mighty offering to appease the gods. And on this wise it was to be at the last. For the doom was on them to perish when their city should have closed upon the great horse of wood, wherein sat all the bravest of the Argives, bearing to the Trojans death and destiny. And he sang how the sons of the Achaeans poured forth from the horse, and left the hollow lair, and sacked the burg. And he sang how and where each man wasted the town, and of Odysseus, how he went like Ares to the house of Deiphobus with godlike Menelaus. It was there, he said, that Odysseus adventured the most grievous battle, and in the end prevailed, by grace of great-hearted Athene.

This was the song that the famous minstrel sang. But the heart of Odysseus melted, and the tear wet his cheeks beneath the eyelids. And as a woman throws herself wailing about her dear lord, who hath fallen before his city and the host, warding from his town and his children the pitiless day; and she beholds him dying and drawing difficult breath, and embracing his body wails aloud, while the foemen behind smite her with spears on back and shoulders and lead her up into bondage, to bear labour and trouble, and with the most pitiful grief her cheeks are wasted; even so pitifully fell the tears beneath the brows of Odysseus. Now none of all the company marked him weeping; but Alcinous alone noted it, and was ware thereof, as he sat nigh him and heard him groaning heavily. And presently he spake among the Phaeacians, masters of the oar:

'Hearken, ye captains and counsellors of the Phaeacians, and now let Demodocus hold his hand from the loud lyre, for this song of his is nowise pleasing alike to all. From the time that we began to sup, and that the divine minstrel was moved to sing, ever since hath yonder stranger never ceased from woeful lamentation: sore grief, methinks, hath encompassed his heart. Nay, but let the minstrel cease, that we may all alike make merry, hosts and guest, since it is far meeter so. For all these things are ready for the sake of the honourable stranger, even the convoy and the loving gifts which we give him out of our love. In a brother's place stand the stranger and the suppliant, to him whose wits have even a little range. Wherefore do thou too hide not now with crafty purpose aught whereof I ask thee; it were more meet for thee to tell it out. Say, what is the name whereby they called thee at home, even thy father and thy mother, and others thy townsmen and the dwellers round about? For there is none of all mankind nameless, neither the mean man nor yet the noble, from the first hour of his birth, but parents bestow a name on every man so soon as he is born. Tell me too of thy land, thy township, and thy city, that our ships may conceive of their course to bring thee thither. For the Phaeacians have no pilots nor any rudders after the manner of other ships, but their barques themselves understand the thoughts and intents of men; they know the cities and fat fields of every people, and most swiftly they traverse the gulf of the salt sea, shrouded in mist and cloud, and never do they go in fear of wreck or ruin. Howbeit I heard upon a time this word thus spoken by my father Nausithous, who was wont to say that Poseidon was jealous of us for that we give safe escort to all men. He said that the god would some day smite a well-wrought ship of the Phaeacians as she came home from a convoy over the misty deep, and would overshadow our city with a great mountain. Thus that ancient one would speak, and thus the god may bring it about, or leave it undone, according to the good pleasure of his will. But come now, declare me this and plainly tell it all; whither wast thou borne wandering, and to what shores of men thou camest; tell me of the people and of their fair-lying cities, of those whoso are hard and wild and unjust, and of those likewise who are hospitable and of a god-fearing mind. Declare, too, wherefore thou dost weep and mourn in spirit at the tale of the faring of the Argive Danaans and the lay of Ilios. All this the gods have fashioned, and have woven the skein of death for men, that there might be a song in the ears even of the folk of aftertime. Hadst thou even a kinsman by marriage that fell before Ilios, a true man, a daughter's husband or wife's father, such as are nearest us after those of our own stock and blood? Or else, may be, some loving friend, a good man and true; for a friend with an understanding heart is no whit worse than a brother.'

BOOK IX

Odysseus relates, first, what befell him amongst the Cicones at Ismarus; secondly, amongst the Lotophagi; thirdly, how he was used by the Cyclops Polyphemus.

And Odysseus of many counsels answered him saying: 'King Alcinous, most notable of all the people, verily it is a good thing to list to a minstrel such as this one, like to the gods in voice. Nay, as for me, I say that there is no more gracious or perfect delight than when a whole people makes merry, and the men sit orderly at feast in the halls and listen to the singer, and the tables by them are laden with bread and flesh, and a wine-bearer drawing the wine serves it round and pours it into the cups. This fashion seems to me the fairest thing in the world. But now thy heart was inclined to ask of my grievous troubles, that I may mourn for more exceeding sorrow. What then shall I tell of first, what last, for the gods of heaven have given me woes in plenty? Now, first, will I tell my name, that ye too may know it, and that I, when I have escaped the pitiless day, may yet be your host, though my home is in a far country. I am Odysseus, son of Laertes, who am in men's minds for all manner of wiles, and my fame reaches unto heaven. And I dwell in clear-seen Ithaca, wherein is a mountain Neriton, with trembling forest leaves, standing manifest to view, and many islands lie around, very near one to the other, Dulichium and Same, and wooded Zacynthus. Now Ithaca lies low, furthest up the sea-line toward the darkness, but those others face the dawning and the sun: a rugged isle, but a good nurse of noble youths; and for myself I can see nought beside sweeter than a man's own country. Verily Calypso, the fair goddess, would fain have kept me with her in her hollow caves, longing to have me for her lord; and likewise too, guileful Circe of Aia, would have stayed me in her halls, longing to have me for her lord. But never did they prevail upon my heart within my breast. So surely is there nought sweeter than a man's own country and his parents, even though he dwell far off in a rich home, in a strange land, away from them that begat him. But come, let me tell thee too of the troubles of my journeying, which Zeus laid on me as I came from Troy.

'The wind that bare me from Ilios brought me nigh to the Cicones, even to Ismarus, whereupon I sacked their city and slew the people. And from out the city we took their wives and much substance, and divided them amongst us, that none through me might go lacking his proper share. Howbeit, thereafter I commanded that we should flee with a swift foot, but my men in their great folly hearkened not. There was much wine still a drinking, and still they slew many flocks of sheep by the seashore and kine with trailing feet and shambling gait. Meanwhile the Cicones went and raised a cry to other Cicones their neighbours, dwelling inland, who were more in number than they and braver withal: skilled they were to fight with men from chariots, and when need was on foot. So they gathered in the early morning as thick as leaves and flowers that spring in their season—yea and in that hour an evil doom of Zeus stood by us, ill-fated men, that so we might be sore afflicted. They set their battle in array by the swift ships, and the hosts cast at one another with their bronze-shod spears. So long as it was morn and the sacred day waxed stronger, so long we abode their assault and beat them off, albeit they outnumbered us. But when the sun was wending to the time of the loosing of cattle, then at last the Cicones drave in the Achaeans and overcame them, and six of my goodly-greaved company perished from each ship: but the remnant of us escaped death and destiny.

'Thence we sailed onward stricken at heart, yet glad as men saved from death, albeit we had lost our dear companions. Nor did my curved ships move onward ere we had called thrice on each of those our hapless fellows, who died at the hands of the Cicones on the plain. Now Zeus, gatherer of the clouds, aroused the North Wind against our ships with a terrible tempest, and covered land and sea alike with clouds, and down sped night from heaven. Thus the ships were driven headlong, and their sails were torn to shreds by the might of the wind. So we lowered the sails into the hold, in fear of death, but rowed the ships landward apace. There for two nights and two days we lay continually, consuming our hearts with weariness and sorrow. But when the fair-tressed Dawn had at last brought the full light of the third day, we set up the masts and hoisted the white sails and sat us down, while the wind and the helmsman guided the ships. And now I should have come to mine own country all unhurt, but the wave and the stream of the sea and the North Wind swept me from my course as I was doubling Malea, and drave me wandering past Cythera.

'Thence for nine whole days was I borne by ruinous winds over the teeming deep; but on the tenth day we set foot on the land of the lotus-eaters, who eat a flowery food. So we stepped ashore and drew water, and straightway my company took their midday meal by the swift ships. Now when we had tasted meat and drink I sent forth certain of my company to go and make search what manner of men they were who here live upon the earth by bread, and I chose out two of my fellows, and sent a third with them as herald. Then straightway they went and mixed with the men of the lotus-eaters, and so it was that the lotus-eaters devised not death for our fellows, but gave them of the lotus to taste. Now whosoever of them did eat the honey-sweet fruit of the lotus, had no more wish to bring tidings nor to come back, but there he chose to abide with the lotus-eating men, ever feeding on the lotus, and forgetful of his homeward way. Therefore I led them back to the ships weeping, and sore against their will, and dragged them beneath the benches, and bound them in the hollow barques. But I commanded the rest of my well-loved company to make speed and go on board the swift ships, lest haply any should eat of the lotus and be forgetful of returning. Right soon they embarked and sat upon the benches, and sitting orderly they smote the grey sea water with their oars.

'Thence we sailed onward stricken at heart. And we came to the land of the Cyclôpes, a froward and a lawless folk, who trusting to the deathless gods plant not aught with their hands, neither plough: but, behold, all these things spring for them in plenty, unsown and untilled, wheat, and barley, and vines, which bear great clusters of the juice of the grape, and the rain of Zeus gives them increase. These have neither gatherings for council nor oracles of law, but they dwell in hollow caves on the crests of the high hills, and each one utters the law to his children and his wives, and they reck not one of another.

'Now there is a waste isle stretching without the harbour of the land of the Cyclôpes, neither nigh at hand nor yet afar off, a woodland isle, wherein are wild goats unnumbered, for no path of men scares them, nor do hunters resort thither who suffer hardships in the wood, as they range the mountain crests. Moreover it is possessed neither by flocks nor by ploughed lands, but the soil lies unsown evermore and untilled, desolate of men, and feeds the bleating goats. For the Cyclôpes have by them no ships with vermilion cheek, not yet are there shipwrights in the island, who might fashion decked barques, which should accomplish all their desire, voyaging to the towns of men (as ofttimes men cross the sea to one another in ships), who might likewise have made of their isle a goodly settlement. Yea, it is in no wise a sorry land, but would bear all things in their season; for therein are soft water-meadows by the shores of the grey salt sea, and there the vines know no decay, and the land is level to plough; thence might they reap a crop exceeding deep in due season, for verily there is fatness beneath the soil. Also there is a fair haven, where is no need of moorings, either to cast anchor or to fasten hawsers, but men may run the ship on the beach, and tarry until such time as the sailors are minded to be gone, and favourable breezes blow. Now at the head of the harbour is a well of bright water issuing from a cave, and round it are poplars growing. Thither we sailed, and some god guided us through the night, for it was dark and there was no light to see, a mist lying deep about the ships, nor did the moon show her light from heaven, but was shut in with clouds. No man then beheld that island, neither saw we the long waves rolling to the beach, till we had run our decked ships ashore. And when our ships were beached, we took down all their sails, and ourselves too stept forth upon the strand of the sea, and there we fell into sound sleep and waited for the bright Dawn.

'So soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rósy-fingered, in wonder at the island we roamed over the length thereof: and the Nymphs, the daughters of Zeus, lord of the aegis, started the wild goats of the hills, that my company might have wherewith to sup. Anon we took to us our curved bows from out the ships and long spears, and arrayed in three bands we began shooting at the goats; and the god soon gave us game in plenty. Now twelve ships bare me company, and to each ship fell nine goats for a portion, but for me alone they set ten apart.

'Thus we sat there the livelong day until the going down of the sun, feasting on abundant flesh and on sweet wine. For the red wine was not yet spent from out the ships, but somewhat was yet therein, for we had each one drawn off large store thereof in jars, when we took the sacred citadel of the Cicones. And we looked across to the land of the Cyclôpes who dwell nigh, and to the smoke, and to the voice of the men, and of the sheep and of the goats. And when the sun had sunk and darkness had come on, then we laid us to rest upon the sea-beach. So soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, then I called a gathering of my men, and spake among them all:

'"Abide here all the rest of you, my dear companions; but I will go with mine own ship and my ship's company, and make proof of these men, what manner of folk they are, whether froward, and wild, and unjust, or hospitable and of god-fearing mind."

'So I spake, and I climbed the ship's side, and bade my company themselves to mount, and to loose the hawsers. So they soon embarked and sat upon the benches, and sitting orderly smote the grey sea water with their oars. Now when we had come to the land that lies hard by, we saw a cave on the border near to the sea, lofty and roofed over with laurels, and there many flocks of sheep and goats were used to rest. And about it a high outer court was built with stones, deep bedded, and with tall pines and oaks with their high crown of leaves. And a man was wont to sleep therein, of monstrous size, who shepherded his flocks alone and afar, and was not conversant with others, but dwelt apart in lawlessness of mind.

Yea, for he was a monstrous thing and fashioned marvellously, nor was he like to any man that lives by bread, but like a wooded peak of the towering hills, which stands out apart and alone from others.

'Then I commanded the rest of my well-loved company to tarry there by the ship, and to guard the ship, but I chose out twelve men, the best of my company, and sallied forth. Now I had with me a goat-skin of the dark wine and sweet, which Maron, son of Euanthes, had given me, the priest of Apollo, the god that watched over Ismarus. And he gave it, for that we had protected him with his wife and child reverently; for he dwelt in a thick grove of Phoebus Apollo. And he made me splendid gifts; he gave me seven talents of gold well wrought, and he gave me a mixing bowl of pure silver, and furthermore wine which he drew off in twelve jars in all, sweet wine unmingled, a draught divine; nor did any of his servants or of his handmaids in the house know thereof, but himself and his dear wife and one housedame only. And as often as they drank that red wine honey sweet, he would fill one cup and pour it into twenty measures of water, and a marvellous sweet smell went up from the mixing bowl: then truly it was no pleasure to refrain.

'With this wine I filled a great skin, and bare it with me, and corn too I put in a wallet, for my lordly spirit straightway had a boding that a man would come to me, a strange man, clothed in mighty strength, one that knew not judgment and justice.

'Soon we came to the cave, but we found him not within; he was shepherding his fat flocks in the pastures. So we went into the cave, and gazed on all that was therein. The baskets were well laden with cheeses, and the folds were thronged with lambs and kids; each kind was penned by itself, the firstlings apart, and the summer lambs apart, apart too the younglings of the flock. Now all the vessels swam with whey, the milk-pails and the bowls, the well-wrought vessels whereinto he milked. My company then spake and besought me first of all to take of the cheeses and to return, and afterwards to make haste and drive off the kids and lambs to the swift ships from out the pens, and to sail over the salt sea water. Howbeit I hearkened not (and far better would it have been), but waited to see the giant himself, and whether he would give me gifts as a stranger's due. Yet was not his coming to be with joy to my company.

'Then we kindled a fire, and made burnt-offering, and ourselves likewise took of the cheeses, and did eat, and sat waiting for him within till he came back, shepherding his flocks. And he bore a grievous weight of dry wood, against supper time. This log he cast down with a din inside the cave, and in fear we fled to the secret place of the rock. As for him, he drave his fat flocks into the wide cavern, even all that he was wont to milk; but the males both of the sheep and of the goats he left without in the deep yard. Thereafter he lifted a huge doorstone and weighty, and set it in the mouth of the cave, such an one as two and twenty good four-wheeled wains could not raise from the ground, so mighty a sheer rock did he set against the doorway. Then he sat down and milked the ewes and bleating goats all orderly, and beneath each ewe he placed her young. And anon he curdled one half of the white milk, and massed it together, and stored it in wicker-baskets, and the other half he let stand in pails, that he might have it to take and drink against supper time. Now when he had done all his work busily, then he kindled the fire anew, and espied us, and made question:

'"Strangers, who are ye? Whence sail ye over the wet ways? On some trading enterprise or at adventure do ye rove, even as sea-robbers over the brine, for at hazard of their own lives they wander, bringing bale to alien men."

'So spake he, but as for us our heart within us was broken for terror of the deep voice and his own monstrous shape; yet despite all I answered and spake unto him, saying:

'"Lo, we are Achaeans, driven wandering from Troy, by all manner of winds over the great gulf of the sea; seeking our homes we fare, but another path have we come, by other ways: even such, methinks, was the will and the counsel of Zeus. And we avow us to be the men of Agamemnon, son of Atreus, whose fame is even now the mightiest under heaven, so great a city did he sack, and destroyed many people; but as for us we have lighted here, and come to these thy knees, if perchance thou wilt give us a stranger's gift, or make any present, as is the due of strangers. Nay, lord, have regard to the gods, for we are thy suppliants; and Zeus is the avenger of suppliants and sojourners, Zeus, the god of the stranger, who fareth in the company of reverend strangers."

'So I spake, and anon he answered out of his pitiless heart: "Thou art witless, my stranger, or thou hast come from afar, who biddest me either to fear or shun the gods. For the Cyclôpes pay no heed to Zeus, lord of the aegis, nor to the blessed gods, for verily we are better men than they. Nor would I, to shun the enmity of Zeus, spare either thee or thy company, unless my spirit bade me. But tell me where thou didst stay thy well-wrought ship on thy coming? Was it perchance at the far end of the island, or hard by, that I may know?"

'So he spake tempting me, but he cheated me not, who knew full much, and I answered him again with words of guile:

'"As for my ship, Poseidon, shaker of the earth, brake it to pieces, for he cast it upon the rocks at the border of your country, and brought it nigh the headland, and a wind bare it thither from the sea. But I with these my men escaped from utter doom."

'So I spake, and out of his pitiless heart he answered me not a word, but sprang up, and laid his hands upon my fellows, and clutching two together dashed them, as they had been whelps, to the earth, and the brain flowed forth upon the ground, and the earth was wet. Then cut he them up piecemeal, and made ready his supper. So he ate even as a mountain-bred lion, and ceased not, devouring entrails and flesh and bones with their marrow. And we wept and raised our hands to Zeus, beholding the cruel deeds; and we were at our wits' end. And after the Cyclops had filled his huge maw with human flesh and the milk he drank thereafter, he lay within the cave, stretched out among his sheep.

'So I took counsel in my great heart, whether I should draw near, and pluck my sharp sword from my thigh, and stab him in the breast, where the midriff holds the liver, feeling for the place with my hand. But my second thought withheld me, for so should we too have perished even there with utter doom. For we should not have prevailed to roll away with our hands from the lofty door the heavy stone which he set there. So for that time we made moan, awaiting the bright Dawn.

'Now when early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, again he kindled the fire and milked his goodly flocks all orderly, and beneath each ewe set her lamb. Anon when he had done all his work busily, again he seized yet other two men and made ready his mid-day meal. And after the meal, lightly he moved away the great door-stone, and drave his fat flocks forth from the cave, and afterwards he set it in his place again, as one might set the lid on a quiver. Then with a loud whoop, the Cyclops turned his fat flocks towards the hills; but I was left devising evil in the deep of my heart, if in any wise I might avenge me, and Athene grant me renown.

'And this was the counsel that showed best in my sight. There lay by a sheep-fold a great club of the Cyclops, a club of olive wood, yet green, which he had cut to carry with him when it should be seasoned. Now when we saw it we likened it in size to the mast of a black ship of twenty oars, a wide merchant vessel that traverses the great sea gulf, so huge it was to view in bulk and length. I stood thereby and cut off from it a portion as it were a fathom's length, and set it by my fellows, and bade them fine it down, and they made it even, while I stood by and sharpened it to a point, and straightway I took it and hardened it in the bright fire. Then I laid it well away, and hid it beneath the dung, which was scattered in great heaps in the depths of the cave. And I bade my company cast lots among them, which of them should risk the adventure with me, and lift the bar and turn it about in his eye, when sweet sleep came upon him. And the lot fell upon those four whom I myself would have been fain to choose, and I appointed myself to be the fifth among them. In the evening he came shepherding his flocks of goodly fleece, and presently he drave his fat flocks into the cave each and all, nor left he any without in the deep court-yard, whether through some foreboding, or perchance that the god so bade him do. Thereafter he lifted the huge door-stone and set it in the mouth of the cave, and sitting down he milked the ewes and bleating goats, all orderly, and beneath each ewe he placed her young. Now when he had done all his work busily, again he seized yet other two and made ready his supper. Then I stood by the Cyclops and spake to him, holding in my hands an ivy bowl of the dark wine:

'"Cyclops, take and drink wine after thy feast of man's meat, that thou mayest know what manner of drink this was that our ship held. And lo, I was bringing it thee as a drink offering, if haply thou mayest take pity and send me on my way home, but thy mad rage is past all sufferance. O hard of heart, how may another of the many men there be come ever to thee again, seeing that thy deeds have been lawless?"

'So I spake, and he took the cup and drank it off, and found great delight in drinking the sweet draught, and asked me for it yet a second time:

'"Give it me again of thy grace, and tell me thy name straightway, that I may give thee a stranger's gift, wherein thou mayest be glad. Yea for the earth, the grain-giver, bears for the Cyclôpes the mighty cluster of the juice of the grape, and the rain of Zeus gives them increase, but this is a rill of very nectar and ambrosia."

'So he spake, and again I handed him the dark wine. Thrice I bare and gave it him, and thrice in his folly he drank it to the lees. Now when the wine had got about the wits of the Cyclops, then did I speak to him with soft words:

'"Cyclops, thou askest me my renowned name, and I will declare it unto thee, and do thou grant me a stranger's gift, as thou didst promise. Noman is my name, and Noman they call me, my father and my mother and all my fellows."

'So I spake, and straightway he answered me out of his pitiless heart:

'"Noman will I eat last in the number of his fellows, and the others before him: that shall be thy gift."

'Therewith he sank backwards and fell with face upturned, and there he lay with his great neck bent round, and sleep, that conquers all men, overcame him. And the wine and the fragments of men's flesh issued forth from his mouth, and he vomited, being heavy with wine. Then I thrust in that stake under the deep ashes, until it should grow hot, and I spake to my companions comfortable words, lest any should hang back from me in fear. But when that bar of olive wood was just about to catch fire in the flame, green though it was, and began to glow terribly, even then I came nigh, and drew it from the coals, and my fellows gathered about me, and some god breathed great courage into us. For their part they seized the bar of olive wood, that was sharpened at the point, and thrust it into his eye, while I from my place aloft turned it about, as when a man bores a ship's beam with a drill while his fellows below spin it with a strap, which they hold at either end, and the auger runs round continually. Even so did we seize the fiery-pointed brand and whirled it round in his eye, and the blood flowed about the heated bar. And the breath of the flame singed his eyelids and brows all about, as the ball of the eye burnt away, and the roots thereof crackled in the flame. And as when a smith dips an axe or adze in chill water with a great hissing, when he would temper it—for hereby anon comes the strength of iron—even so did his eye hiss round the stake of olive. And he raised a great and terrible cry, that the rock rang around, and we fled away in fear, while he plucked forth from his eye the brand bedabbled in much blood. Then maddened with pain he cast it from him with his hands, and called with a loud voice on the Cyclôpes, who dwelt about him in the caves along the windy heights. And they heard the cry and flocked together from every side, and gathering round the cave asked him what ailed him.

'"What hath so distressed thee, Polyphemus, that thou criest thus aloud through the immortal night, and makest us sleepless? Surely no mortal driveth off thy flocks against thy will: surely none slayeth thyself by force or craft?"

'And the strong Polyphemus spake to them again from out the cave: "My friends, Noman is slaying me by guile, nor at all by force."

'And they answered and spake winged words: "If then no man is violently handling thee in thy solitude, it can in no wise be that thou shouldest escape the sickness sent by mighty Zeus. Nay, pray thou to thy father, the lord Poseidon."

'On this wise they spake and departed; and my heart within me laughed to see how my name and cunning counsel had beguiled them. But the Cyclops, groaning and travailing in pain, groped with his hands, and lifted away the stone from the door of the cave, and himself sat in the entry, with arms outstretched to catch, if he might, any one that was going forth with his sheep, so witless, methinks, did he hope to find me. But I advised me how all might be for the very best, if perchance I might find a way of escape from death for my companions and myself, and I wove all manner of craft and counsel, as a man will for his life, seeing that great mischief was nigh. And this was the counsel that showed best in my sight. The rams of the flock were well nurtured and thick of fleece, great and goodly, with wool dark as the violet. Quietly I lashed them together with twisted withies, whereon the Cyclops slept, that lawless monster. Three together I took: now the middle one of the three would bear each a man, but the other twain went on either side, saving my fellows. Thus every three sheep bare their man. But as for me I laid hold of the back of a young ram who was far the best and the goodliest of all the flock, and curled beneath his shaggy belly there I lay, and so clung face upward, grasping the wondrous fleece with a steadfast heart. So for that time making moan we awaited the bright Dawn.

'So soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, then did the rams of the flock hasten forth to pasture, but the ewes bleated unmilked about the pens, for their udders were swollen to bursting. Then their lord, sore stricken with pain, felt along the backs of all the sheep as they stood up before him, and guessed not in his folly how that my men were bound beneath the breasts of his thick-fleeced flocks. Last of all the sheep came forth the ram, cumbered with his wool, and the weight of me and my cunning. And the strong Polyphemus laid his hands on him and spake to him, saying:

'"Dear ram, wherefore, I pray thee, art thou the last of all the flocks to go forth from the cave, who of old wast not wont to lag behind the sheep, but wert ever the foremost to pluck the tender blossom of the pasture, faring with long strides, and wert still the first to come to the streams of the rivers, and first didst long to return to the homestead in the evening. But now art thou the very last. Surely thou art sorrowing for the eye of thy lord, which an evil man blinded, with his accursed fellows, when he had subdued my wits with wine, even Noman, whom I say hath not yet escaped destruction. Ah, if thou couldst feel as I, and be endued with speech, to tell me where he shifts about to shun my wrath; then should he be smitten, and his brains be dashed against the floor here and there about the cave, and my heart be lightened of the sorrows which Noman, nothing worth, hath brought me!"

'Therewith he sent the ram forth from him, and when we had gone but a little way from the cave and from the yard, first I loosed myself from under the ram and then I set my fellows free. And swiftly we drave on those stiff-shanked sheep, so rich in fat, and often turned to look about, till we came to the ship. And a glad sight to our fellows were we that had fled from death, but the others they would have bemoaned with tears; howbeit I suffered it not, but with frowning brows forbade each man to weep. Rather I bade them to cast on board the many sheep with goodly fleece, and to sail over the salt sea water. So they embarked forthwith, and sate upon the benches, and sitting orderly smote the grey sea water with their oars. But when I had not gone so far, but that a man's shout might be heard, then I spoke unto the Cyclops taunting him:

'"Cyclops, so thou wert not to eat the company of a weakling by main might in thy hollow cave! Thine evil deeds were very sure to find thee out, thou cruel man, who hadst no shame to eat thy guests within thy gates, wherefore Zeus hath requited thee, and the other gods."

'So I spake, and he was yet the more angered at heart, and he brake off the peak of a great hill and threw it at us, and it fell in front of the dark-prowed ship. And the sea heaved beneath the fall of the rock, and the backward flow of the wave bare the ship quickly to the dry land, with the wash from the deep sea, and drave it to the shore. Then I caught up a long pole in my hands, and thrust the ship from off the land, and roused my company, and with a motion of the head bade them dash in with their oars, that so we might escape our evil plight. So they bent to their oars and rowed on. But when we had now made twice the distance over the brine, I would fain have spoken to the Cyclops, but my company stayed me on every side with soft words, saying:

'"Foolhardy that thou art, why wouldst thou rouse a wild man to wrath, who even now hath cast so mighty a throw towards the deep and brought our ship back to land, yea and we thought that we had perished even there? If he had heard any of us utter sound or speech he would have crushed our heads and our ship timbers with a cast of a rugged stone, so mightily he hurls."

'So spake they, but they prevailed not on my lordly spirit, and I answered him again from out an angry heart:

'"Cyclops, if any one of mortal men shall ask thee of the unsightly blinding of thine eye, say that it was Odysseus that blinded it, the waster of cities, son of Laertes, whose dwelling is in Ithaca."

'So I spake, and with a moan he answered me, saying:

'"Lo now, in very truth the ancient oracles have come upon me. There lived here a soothsayer, a noble man and a mighty, Telemus, son of Eurymus, who surpassed all men in soothsaying, and waxed old as a seer among the Cyclôpes. He told me that all these things should come to pass in the aftertime, even that I should lose my eyesight at the hand of Odysseus. But I ever looked for some tall and goodly man to come hither, clad in great might, but behold now one that is a dwarf, a man of no worth and a weakling, hath blinded me of my eye after subduing me with wine. Nay come hither, Odysseus, that I may set by thee a stranger's cheer, and speed thy parting hence, that so the Earth-shaker may vouchsafe it thee, for his son am I, and he avows him for my father. And he himself will heal me, if it be his will; and none other of the blessed gods or of mortal men."

'Even so he spake, but I answered him, and said: "Would god that I were as sure to rob thee of soul and life, and send thee within the house of Hades, as I am that not even the Earth-shaker will heal thine eye!"

'So I spake, and then he prayed to the lord Poseidon stretching forth his hands to the starry heaven: "Hear me, Poseidon, girdler of the earth, god of the dark hair, if indeed I be thine, and thou avowest thee my sire,—grant that he may never come to his home, even Odysseus, waster of cities, the son of Laertes, whose dwelling is in Ithaca; yet if he is ordained to see his friends and come unto his well-builded house, and his own country, late may he come in evil case, with the loss of all his company, in the ship of strangers and find sorrows in his house."

'So he spake in prayer, and the god of the dark locks heard him. And once again he lifted a stone, far greater than the first, and with one swing he hurled it, and he put forth a measureless strength, and cast it but a little space behind the dark-prowed ship, and all but struck the end of the rudder. And the sea heaved beneath the fall of the rock, but the wave bare on the ship and drave it to the further shore.

'But when we had now reached that island, where all our other decked ships abode together, and our company were gathered sorrowing, expecting us evermore, on our coming thither we ran our ship ashore upon the sand, and ourselves too stept forth upon the sea beach. Next we took forth the sheep of the Cyclops from out the hollow ship, and divided them, that none through me might go lacking his proper share. But the ram for me alone my goodly-greaved company chose out, in the dividing of the sheep, and on the shore I offered him up to Zeus, even to the son of Cronos, who dwells in the dark clouds, and is lord of all, and I burnt the slices of the thighs. But he heeded not the sacrifice, but was devising how my decked ships and my dear company might perish utterly. Thus for that time we sat the livelong day, until the going down of the sun, feasting on abundant flesh and sweet wine. And when the sun had sunk and darkness had come on, then we laid us to rest upon the sea beach. So soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, I called to my company, and commanded them that they should themselves climb the ship and loose the hawsers. So they soon embarked and sat upon the benches, and sitting orderly smote the grey sea water with their oars.

'Thence we sailed onward stricken at heart, yet glad as men saved from death, albeit we had lost our dear companions.

BOOK X

Odysseus, his entertainment by Aeolus, of whom he received a fair wind for the present, and all the rest of the winds tied up in a bag; which his men untying, flew out, and carried him back to Aeolus, who refused to receive him. His adventure at Lestrygonia with Antiphates, where of twelve ships he lost eleven, men and all. How he went thence to the Isle of Aea, where half of his men were turned by Circe into swine, and how he went himself, and by the help of Hermes recovered them and stayed with Circe a year.

'THEN we came to the isle Aeolian, where dwelt Aeolus, son of Hippotas, dear to the deathless gods, in a floating island, and all about it is a wall of bronze unbroken, and the cliff runs up sheer from the sea. His twelve children too abide there in his halls, six daughters and six lusty sons; and, behold, he gave his daughters to his sons to wife. And they feast evermore by their dear father and their kind mother, and dainties innumerable lie ready to their hands. And the house is full of the savour of feasting, and the noise thereof rings round, yea in the courtyard, by day, and in the night they sleep each one by his chaste wife in coverlets and on jointed bedsteads. So then we came to their city and their goodly dwelling, and the king entreated me kindly for a whole month, and sought out each thing, Ilios and the ships of the Argives, and the return of the Achaeans. So I told him all the tale in order duly. But when I in turn took the word and asked of my journey, and bade him send me on my way, he too denied me not, but furnished an escort. He gave me a wallet, made of the hide of an ox of nine seasons old, which he let flay, and therein he bound the ways of all the noisy winds; for him the son of Cronos made keeper of the winds, either to lull or to rouse what blasts he will. And he made it fast in the hold of the ship with a shining silver thong, that not the faintest breath might escape. Then he sent forth the blast of the West Wind to blow for me, to bear our ships and ourselves upon our way; but this he was never to bring to pass, for we were undone through our own heedlessness.

'For nine whole days we sailed by night and day continually, and now on the tenth day my native land came in sight, and already we were so near that we beheld the folk tending the beacon fires. Then over me there came sweet slumber in my weariness, for I kept my hand ever on the helm, nor gave it to any of my company, that so we might come quicker to our own country. Meanwhile my company held converse together, and said that I was bringing home for myself gold and silver, gifts from Aeolus the high-hearted son of Hippotas. And thus would they speak looking each man to his neighbour:

'"Lo now, how beloved he is and highly esteemed among all men, to the city and land of whomsoever he may come. Many are the goodly treasures he taketh with him out of the spoil from Troy, while we who have fulfilled like journeying with him return homeward bringing with us but empty hands. And now Aeolus hath given unto him these things freely in his love. Nay come, let us quickly see what they are, even what wealth of gold and silver is in the wallet."

'So they spake, and the evil counsel of my company prevailed. They loosed the wallet, and all the winds brake forth. And the violent blast seized my men, and bare them towards the high seas weeping, away from their own country; but as for me, I awoke and communed with my great heart, whether I should cast myself from the ship and perish in the deep, or endure in silence and abide yet among the living. Howbeit I hardened my heart to endure, and muffling my head I lay still in the ship. But the vessels were driven by the evil storm-wind back to the isle Aeolian, and my company made moan.

'There we stepped ashore and drew water, and my company presently took their midday meal by the swift ships. Now when we had tasted bread and wine, I took with me a herald and one of my company, and went to the famous dwelling of Aeolus: and I found him feasting with his wife and children. So we went in and sat by the pillars of the door on the threshold, and they all marvelled and asked us:

'"How hast thou come hither, Odysseus? What evil god assailed thee? Surely we sent thee on thy way with all diligence, that thou mightest get thee to thine own country and thy home, and whithersoever thou wouldest."

'Even so they said, but I spake among them heavy at heart: "My evil company hath been my bane, and sleep thereto remorseless. Come, my friends, do ye heal the harm, for yours is the power."

'So I spake, beseeching them in soft words, but they held their peace. And the father answered, saying: "Get thee forth from the island straightway, thou that art the most reprobate of living men. Far be it from me to help or to further that man whom the blessed gods abhor! Get thee forth, for lo, thy coming marks thee hated by the deathless gods."

'Therewith he sent me forth from the house making heavy moan. Thence we sailed onwards stricken at heart. And the spirit of the men was spent beneath the grievous rowing by reason of our vain endeavour, for there was no more any sign of a wafting wind. So for the space of six days we sailed by night and day continually, and on the seventh we came to the steep stronghold of Lamos, Telepylos of the Laestrygons, where herdsman hails herdsman as he drives in his flock, and the other who drives forth answers the call. There might a sleepless man have earned a double wage, the one as neat-herd, the other shepherding white flocks: so near are the outgoings of the night and of the day. Thither when we had come to the fair haven, whereabout on both sides goes one steep cliff unbroken, and jutting headlands over against each other stretch forth at the mouth of the harbour, and strait is the entrance; thereinto all the others steered their curved ships. Now the vessels were bound within the hollow harbour each hard by other, for no wave ever swelled within it, great or small, but there was a bright calm all around. But I alone moored my dark ship without the harbour, at the uttermost point thereof, and made fast the hawser to a rock. And I went up a craggy hill, a place of out-look, and stood thereon thence there was no sign of the labour of men or oxen, only we saw the smoke curling upward from the land. Then I sent forth certain of my company to go and search out what manner of men they were who here live upon the earth by bread, choosing out two of my company and sending a third with them as herald. Now when they had gone ashore, they went along a level road whereby wains were wont to draw down wood from the high hills to the town. And without the town they fell in with a damsel drawing water, the noble daughter of Laestrygonian Antiphates. She had come down to the clear-flowing spring Artacia, for thence it was custom to draw water to the town. So they stood by her and spake unto her, and asked who was king of that land, and who they were he ruled over. Then at once she showed them the high-roofed hall of her father. Now when they had entered the renowned house, they found his wife therein: she was huge of bulk as a mountain peak and was loathly in their sight. Straightway she called the renowned Antiphates, her lord, from the assembly-place, and he contrived a pitiful destruction for my men. Forthwith he clutched up one of my company and made ready his midday meal, but the other twain sprang up and came in flight to the ships. Then he raised the war cry through the town, and the valiant Laestrygons at the sound thereof, flocked together from every side, a host past number, not like men but like the Giants. They cast at us from the cliffs with great rocks, each of them a man's burden, and anon there arose from the fleet an evil din of men dying and ships shattered withal. And like folk spearing fishes they bare home their hideous meal. While as yet they were slaying my friends within the deep harbour, I drew my sharp sword from my thigh, and with it cut the hawsers of my dark-prowed ship. Quickly then I called to my company, and bade them dash in with the oars, that we might clean escape this evil plight. And all with one accord they tossed the sea water with the oar-blade, in dread of death, and to my delight my barque flew forth to the high seas away from the beetling rocks, but those other ships were lost there, one and all.

'Thence we sailed onward stricken at heart, yet glad as men saved from death, albeit we had lost our dear companions. And we came to the isle Aeaean,where dwelt Circe of the braided tresses, an awful goddess of mortal speech, own sister to the wizard Aeetes. Both were begotten of Helios, who gives light to all men, and their mother was Perse, daughter of Oceanus. There on the shore we put in with our ship into the sheltering haven silently, and some god was our guide. Then we stept ashore, and for two days and two nights lay there, consuming our own hearts for weariness and pain. But when now the fair-tressed Dawn had brought the full light of the third day, then did I seize my spear and my sharp sword, and quickly departing from the ship I went up unto a place of wide prospect, if haply I might see any sign of the labour of men and hear the sound of their speech. So I went up a craggy hill, a place of out-look, and I saw the smoke rising from the broad-wayed earth in the halls of Circe, through the thick coppice and the woodland. Then I mused in my mind and heart whether I should go and make discovery, for that I had seen the smoke and flame. And as I thought thereon this seemed to me the better counsel, to go first to the swift ship and to the sea-banks, and give my company their midday meal, and then send them to make search. But as I came and drew nigh to the curved ship, some god even then took pity on me in my loneliness, and sent a tall antlered stag across my very path. He was coming down from his pasture in the woodland to the river to drink, for verily the might of the sun was sore upon him. And as he came up from out of the stream, I smote him on the spine in the middle of the back, and the brazen shaft passed clean through him, and with a moan he fell in the dust, and his life passed from him. Then I set my foot on him and drew forth the brazen shaft from the wound, and laid it hard by upon the ground and let it lie. Next I broke withies and willow trigs, and wove me a rope a fathom in length, well twisted from end to end, and bound together the feet of the huge beast, and went to the black ship bearing him across my neck, and leaning on a spear, for it was in no wise possible to carry him on my shoulder with the one hand, for he was a mighty quarry. And I threw him down before the ship and roused my company with soft words, standing by each man in turn:

'"Friends, for all our sorrows we shall not yet a while go down to the house of Hades, ere the coming of the day of destiny; go to then, while as yet there is meat and drink in the swift ship, let us take thought thereof, that we be not famished for hunger."

'Even so I spake, and they speedily hearkened to my words. They unmuffled their heads, and there on the shore of the unharvested sea gazed at the stag, for he was a mighty quarry. But after they had delighted their eyes with the sight of him, they washed their hands and got ready the glorious feast. So for that time we sat the livelong day till the going down of the sun, feasting on abundant flesh and sweet wine. But when the sun sank and darkness had come on, then we laid us to rest upon the sea beach. So soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, I called a gathering of my men and spake in the ears of them all:

'"Hear my words, my fellows, despite your evil case. My friends, lo, now we know not where is the place of darkness or of dawning, nor where the Sun, that gives light to men, goes beneath the earth, nor where he rises; therefore let us advise us speedily if any counsel yet may be: as for me, I deem there is none. For I went up a craggy hill, a place of outlook, and saw the island crowned about with the circle of the endless sea, the isle itself lying low; and in the midst thereof mine eyes beheld the smoke through the thick coppice and the woodland."

'Even so I spake, but their spirit within them was broken, as they remembered the deeds of Antiphates the Laestrygonian, and all the evil violence of the haughty Cyclops, the man-eater. So they wept aloud shedding big tears. Howbeit no avail came of their weeping.

'Then I numbered my goodly-greaved company in two bands, and appointed a leader for each, and I myself took the command of the one part, and godlike Eurylochus of the other. And anon we shook the lots in a brazen-fitted helmet, and out leapt the lot of proud Eurylochus. So he went on his way, and with him two and twenty of my fellowship all weeping; and we were left behind making lament. In the forest glades they found the halls of Circe builded, of polished stone, in a place with wide prospect. And all around the palace mountain-bred wolves and lions were roaming, whom she herself had bewitched with evil drugs that she gave them. Yet the beasts did not set on my men, but lo, they ramped about them and fawned on them, wagging their long tails. And as when dogs fawn about their lord when he comes from the feast, for he always brings them the fragments that soothe their mood, even so the strong-clawed wolves and the lions fawned around them; but they were affrighted when the saw the strange and terrible creatures. So they stood at the outer gate of the fair-tressed goddess, and within they heard Circe singing in a sweet voice, as she fared to and fro before the great web imperishable, such as is the handiwork of goddesses, fine of woof and full of grace and splendour. Then Polites, a leader of men, the dearest to me and the trustiest of all my company, first spake to them:

'"Friends, forasmuch as there is one within that fares to and fro before a mighty web singing a sweet song, so that all the floor of the hall makes echo, a goddess she is or a woman; come quickly and cry aloud to her."

'He spake the word and they cried aloud and called to her. And straightway she came forth and opened the shining doors and bade them in, and all went with her in their heedlessness. But Eurylochus tarried behind, for he guessed that there was some treason. So she led them in and set them upon chairs and high seats, and made them a mess of cheese and barley-meal and yellow honey with Pramnian wine, and mixed harmful drugs with the food to make them utterly forget their own country. Now when she had given them the cup and they had drunk it off, presently she smote them with a wand, and in the styes of the swine she penned them. So they had the head and voice, the bristles and the shape of swine, but their mind abode even as of old. Thus were they penned there weeping, and Circe flung them acorns and mast and fruit of the cornel tree to eat, whereon wallowing swine do always batten.

'Now Eurylochus came back to the swift black ship to bring tidings of his fellows, and of their unseemly doom. Not a word could he utter, for all his desire, so deeply smitten was he to the heart with grief, and his eyes were filled with tears and his soul was fain of lamentation. But when we all had pressed him with our questions in amazement, even then he told the fate of the remnant of our company.

'"We went, as thou didst command, through the coppice, noble Odysseus: we found within the forest glades the fair halls, builded of polished stone, in a place with wide prospect. And there was one that fared before a mighty web and sang a clear song, a goddess she was or a woman, and they cried aloud and called to her. And straightway she came forth, and opened the shining doors and bade them in, and they all went with her in their heedlessness. But I tarried behind, for I guessed that there was some treason. Then they vanished away one and all, nor did any of them appear again, though I sat long time watching."

'So spake he, whereon I cast about my shoulder my silver-studded sword, a great blade of bronze, and slung my bow about me and bade him lead me again by the way that he came. But he caught me with both hands, and by my knees he besought me, and bewailing him spake to me winged words:

'"Lead me not thither against my will, oh fosterling of Zeus, but leave me here! For well I know thou shalt thyself return no more, nor bring any one of all thy fellowship; nay, let us flee the swifter with those that be here, for even yet may we escape the evil day."

'On this wise he spake, but I answered him, saying: "Eurylochus, abide for thy part here in this place, eating and drinking by the black hollow ship: but I will go forth, for a strong constraint is laid on me."

'With that I went up from the ship and the sea-shore. But lo, when in my faring through the sacred glades I was now drawing near to the great hall of the enchantress Circe, then did Hermes, of the golden wand, meet me as I approached the house, in the likeness of a young man with the first down on his lip, the time when youth is most gracious. So he clasped my hand and spake and hailed me:

'"Ah, hapless man, whither away again, all alone through the wolds, thou that knowest not this country? And thy company yonder in the hall of Circe are penned in the guise of swine, in their deep lairs abiding. Is it in hope to free them that thou art come hither? Nay, methinks, thou thyself shalt never return but remain there with the others. Come then, I will redeem thee from thy distress, and bring deliverance. Lo, take this herb of virtue, and go to the dwelling of Circe, that it may keep from thy head the evil day. And I will tell thee all the magic sleight of Circe. She will mix thee a potion and cast drugs into the mess; but not even so shall she be able to enchant thee; so helpful is this charmed herb that I shall give thee, and I will tell thee all. When it shall be that Circe smites thee with her long wand, even then draw thou thy sharp sword from thy thigh, and spring on her, as one eager to slay her. And she will shrink away and be instant with thee to lie with her. Thenceforth disdain not thou the bed of the goddess, that she may deliver thy company and kindly entertain thee. But command her to swear a mighty oath by the blessed gods, that she will plan nought else of mischief to thine own hurt, lest she make thee a dastard and unmanned, when she hath thee naked."

'Therewith the slayer of Argos gave me the plant that he had plucked from the ground, and he showed me the growth thereof. It was black at the root but the flower was like to milk. Moly the gods call it, but it is hard for mortal men to dig; howbeit with the gods all things are possible.

'Then Hermes departed toward high Olympus, up through the woodland isle, but as for me I held on my way to the house of Circe, and my heart was darkly troubled as I went. So I halted in the portals of the fair-tressed goddess; there I stood and called aloud and the goddess heard my voice, who presently came forth and opened the shining doors and bade me in, and I went with her heavy at heart. So she led me in and set me on a chair with studs of silver, a goodly carven chair, and beneath was a footstool for the feet. And she made me a potion in a golden cup, that I might drink, and she also put a charm therein, in the evil counsel of her heart. Now when she had given it and I had drunk it off and was not bewitched, she smote me with her wand and spake and hailed me:

'"Go thy way now to the stye, couch thee there with the rest of thy company."

'So spake she, but I drew my sharp sword from my thigh and sprang upon Circe, as one eager to slay her. But with a great cry she slipped under, and clasped my knees, and bewailing herself spake to me winged words:

'"Who art thou of the sons of men, and whence? Where is thy city? Where are they that begat thee? I marvel to see how thou hast drunk of this charm, and wast nowise subdued. Nay, for there lives no man else that is proof against this charm, whoso hath drunk thereof, and once it hath passed his lips? But thou hast, methinks, a mind within thee that may not be enchanted. Verily thou art Odysseus, ready at need, whom he of the golden wand, the slayer of Argos, full often told me was to come hither, on his way from Troy with his swift black ship. Nay come, put thy sword into the sheath, and thereafter let us go up into my bed, that meeting in love and sleep we may trust each the other."

'So spake she, but I answered her, saying: "Nay, Circe, how canst thou bid me be gentle to thee, who hast turned my company into swine within thy halls, and holding me here with a guileful heart requirest me to pass within thy chamber and go up into thy bed, that so thou mayest make me a dastard and unmanned when thou hast me naked? Nay, never will I consent to go up into thy bed, except thou wilt deign, goddess, to swear a mighty oath, that thou wilt plan nought else of mischief to mine own hurt."

'So I spake, and she straightway swore the oath not to harm me, as I bade her. But when she had sworn and had done that oath, then at last I went up into the beautiful bed of Circe.

'Now all this while her handmaids busied them in the halls, four maidens that are her serving women in the house. They are born of the wells and of the woods and of the holy rivers, that flow forward into the salt sea. Of these one cast upon the chairs goodly coverlets of purple above, and spread a linen cloth thereunder. And lo, another drew up silver tables to the chairs, and thereon set for them golden baskets. And a third mixed sweet honey-hearted wine in a silver bowl, and set out cups of gold. And a fourth bare water, and kindled a great fire beneath the mighty cauldron. So the water waxed warm; but when it boiled in the bright brazen vessel, she set me in a bath and bathed me with water from out a great cauldron, pouring it over head and shoulders, when she had mixed it to a pleasant warmth, till from my limbs she took away the consuming weariness. Now after she had bathed me and anointed me well with olive oil, and cast about me a fair mantle and a doublet, she led me into the halls, and set me on a chair with studs of silver, a goodly carven chair, and beneath was a footstool for the feet. And a handmaid bare water for the hands in a goodly golden ewer, and poured it forth over a silver basin to wash withal; and to my side she drew a polished table, and a grave dame bare wheaten bread and set it by me, and laid on the board many dainties, giving freely of such things as she had by her. And she bade me eat, but my soul found no pleasure therein. I sat with other thoughts, and my heart had a boding of ill.

'Now when Circe saw that I sat thus, and that I put not forth my hands to the meat, and that I was mightily afflicted, she drew near to me and spake to me winged words:

'"Wherefore thus, Odysseus, dost thou sit there like a speechless man, consuming thine own soul, and dost not touch meat nor drink? Dost thou indeed deem there is some further guile? Nay, thou hast no cause to fear, for already I have sworn thee a strong oath not to harm thee."

'So spake she, but I answered her, saying: "Oh, Circe, what righteous man would have the heart to taste meat and drink ere he had redeemed his company, and beheld them face to face? But if in good faith thou biddest me eat and drink, then let them go free, that mine eyes may behold my dear companions."

'So I spake, and Circe passed out through the hall with the wand in her hand, and opened the doors of the stye, and drave them forth in the shape of swine of nine seasons old. There they stood before her, and she went through their midst and anointed each one of them with another charm. And lo, from their limbs the bristles dropped away, wherewith the venom had erewhile clothed them, that lady Circe gave them. And they became men again, younger than before they were, and goodilier far, and taller to behold. And they all knew me again and each one took my hands, and wistful was the lament that sank into their souls, and the roof around rang wondrously. And even the goddess herself was moved with compassion.

‘Then standing nigh me the fair goddess spake unto me: “Son of Laertes, of the seed of Zeus, Odysseus of many devices, depart now to thy swift ship and the sea-banks. And first of all, draw ye up the ship ashore, and bestow the goods in the caves and all the gear. And thyself return again, and bring with thee thy dear companions.”

‘So spake she, and my lordly spirit consented thereto. So I went on my way to the swift ship and the sea-banks, and there I found my dear company on the swift ship lamenting piteously, shedding big tears. And as when calves of the homestead gather round the droves of kine that have returned to the yard, when they have had their fill of pasture, and all with one accord frisk before them, and the folds may no more contain them, but with a ceaseless lowing they skip about their dams, so flocked they all about me weeping, when their eyes beheld me. Yea, and to their spirit it was as though they had got to their dear country, and the very city of rugged Ithaca, where they were born and reared.

‘Then making lament they spake to me winged words: “O fosterling of Zeus, we were none otherwise glad at thy returning, than if we had come to Ithaca, our own country. Nay come, of our other companions tell us the tale of their ruin.”

‘So spake they, but I answered them with soft words: “Behold, let us first of all draw up the ship ashore, and bestow our goods in the caves and all our gear. And do ye bestir you, one and all, to go with me, that ye may see your fellows in the sacred dwelling of Circe, eating and drinking, for they have continual store.”

‘So spake I, and at once they hearkened to my words, but Eurylochus alone would have holden all my companions, and uttering his voice he spake to them winged words:

‘“Wretched men that we are! whither are we going? Why are your hearts so set on sorrow that ye should go down to the hall of Circe, who will surely change us all to swine, or wolves, or lions, to guard her great house perforce, according to the deeds that the Cyclops wrought, when certain of our company went to his inmost fold, and with them went Odysseus, ever hardy, for through the blindness of his heart did they too perish?"

'So spake he, but I mused in my heart whether to draw my long hanger from my stout thigh, and therewith smite off his head and bring it to the dust, albeit he was very near of kin to me; but the men of my company stayed me on every side with soothing words:

'"Prince of the seed of Zeus, as for this man, we will suffer him, if thou wilt have it so, to abide here by the ship and guard the ship; but as for us, be our guide to the sacred house of Circe."

'So they spake and went up from the ship and the sea. Nay, nor yet was Eurylochus left by the hollow ship, but he went with us, for he feared my terrible rebuke.

'Meanwhile Circe bathed the rest of my company in her halls with all care, and anointed them well with olive oil; and cast thick mantles and doublets about them. And we found them all feasting nobly in the halls. And when they saw and knew each other face to face, they wept and mourned, and the house rang around. Then she stood near me, that fair goddess, and spake saying:

'"Son of Laertes, of the seed of Zeus, Odysseus of many devices, no more now wake this plenteous weeping: myself I know of all the pains ye endured upon the teeming deep, and the great despite done you by unkindly men upon the land. Nay come, eat ye meat and drink wine, till your spirit shall return to you again, as it was when first ye left your own country of rugged Ithaca; but now are ye wasted and wanting heart, mindful evermore of your sore wandering, nor has your heart ever been merry, for very grievous hath been your trial."

'So spake she, and our lordly spirit consented thereto. So there we sat day by day for the full circle of a year, feasting on abundant flesh and sweet wine. But when now a year had gone, and the seasons returned as the months waned, and the long days came in their course, then did my dear company call me forth, and say:

'"Good sir, now is it high time to mind thee of thy native land, if it is ordained that thou shalt be saved, and come to thy lofty house and thine own country."

'So spake they and my lordly spirit consented thereto. So for that time we sat the livelong day till the going down of the sun, feasting on abundant flesh and sweet wine. But when the sun sank and darkness came on, they laid them to rest throughout the shadowy halls.

'But when I had gone up into the fair bed of Circe, I besought her by her knees, and the goddess heard my speech, and uttering my voice I spake to her winged words: "Circe, fufil for me the promise which thus madest me to send me on my homeward way. Now is my spirit eager to be gone, and the spirit of my company, that wear away my heart as they mourn around me, when haply thou art gone from us."

'So spake I, and the fair goddess answered me anon: "Son of Laertes, of the seed of Zeus, Odysseus of many devices, tarry ye now no longer in my house against your will; but first must ye perform another journey, and reach the dwelling of Hades and of dread Persephone to seek to the spirit of Theban Teiresias, the blind soothsayer, whose wits abide steadfast. To him Persephone hath given judgment, even in death, that he alone should have understanding; but the other souls sweep shadow-like around."

'Thus spake she, but as for me, my heart was broken, and I wept as I sat upon the bed, and my soul had no more care to live and to see the sunlight. But when I had my fill of weeping and grovelling, then at the last I answered and spake unto her saying: "And who, Circe, will guide us on this way? for no man ever yet sailed to hell in a black ship."

'So spake I, and the fair goddess answered me anon: "Son of Laertes, of the seed of Zeus, Odysseus of many devices, nay, trouble not thyself for want of a guide, by thy ship abiding, but set up the mast and spread abroad the white sails and sit thee down; and the breeze of the North Wind will bear thy vessel on her way. But when thou hast now sailed in thy ship across the stream Oceanus, where is a waste shore and the groves of Persephone, even tall popular trees and willows that shed their fruit before the season, there beach thy ship by deep eddying Oceanus, but go thyself to the dank house of

Hades. Thereby into Acheron flows Pyriphlegethon, and Cocytus, a branch of the water of the Styx, and there is a rock, and the meeting of the two roaring waters. So, hero, draw nigh thereto, as I command thee, and dig a trench as it were a cubit in length and breadth, and about it pour a drink-offering to all the dead, first with mead and thereafter with sweet wine, and for the third time with water, and sprinkle white meal thereon; and entreat with many prayers the strengthless heads of the dead, and promise that on thy return to Ithaca thou wilt offer in thy halls a barren heifer, the best thou hast, and wilt fill the pyre with treasure, and wilt sacrifice apart, to Teiresias alone, a black ram without spot, the fairest of your flock. But when thou hast with prayers made supplication to the lordly races of the dead, then offer up a ram and a black ewe, bending their heads towards Erebus and thyself turn thy back, with thy face set for the shore of the river. Then will many spirits come to thee of the dead that be departed. Thereafter thou shalt call to thy company and command them to flay the sheep which even now lie slain by the pitiless sword, and to consume them with fire, and to make prayer to the gods, to mighty Hades and to dread Persephone. And thyself draw the sharp sword from thy thigh and sit there, suffering not the strengthless heads of the dead to draw nigh to the blood, ere thou hast word of Teiresias. Then the seer will come to thee quickly, leader of the people; he will surely declare to thee the way and the measure of thy path, and as touching thy returning, how thou mayst go over the teeming deep."

'So spake she, and anon came the golden throned Dawn. Then she put on me a mantle and a doublet for raiment, and the nymph clad herself in a great shining robe, light of woof and gracious, and about her waist she cast a fair golden girdle, and put a veil upon her head. But I passed through the halls and roused my men with smooth words, standing by each one in turn:

'"Sleep ye now no more nor breathe sweet slumber; but let us go on our way, for surely she hath shown me all, the lady Circe."

'So spake I, and their lordly soul consented thereto. Yet even thence I led not my company safe away. There was one,

Elpenor, the youngest of us all, not very valiant in war neither steadfast in mind. He was lying apart from the rest of my men on the housetop of Circe's sacred dwelling, very fain of the cool air, as one heavy with wine. Now when he heard the noise of the voices and of the feet of my fellows as they moved to and fro, he leaped up of a sudden and minded him not to descend again by the way of the tall ladder, but fell right down from the roof, and his neck was broken from the bones of the spine, and his spirit went down to the house of Hades.

'Then I spake among my men as they went on their way, saying: "Ye deem now, I see, that ye are going to your own dear country; but Circe hath showed us another way, even to the dwelling of Hades and of dread Persephone, to seek to the spirit of Theban Teiresias."

'Even so I spake, but their heart within them was broken, and they sat them down even where they were, and made lament and tore their hair. Howbeit no help came of their weeping.

'But as we were now wending sorrowful to the swift ship and the sea-banks, shedding big tears, Circe meanwhile had gone her ways and made fast a ram and a black ewe by the dark ship, lightly passing us by: who may behold a god against his will, whether going to or fro?'

BOOK XI

Odysseus, his descent into hell, and discourses with the ghosts of the deceased heroes.

'Now when we had gone down to the ship and to the sea, first of all we drew the ship unto the fair salt water, and placed the mast and sails in the black ship, and took those sheep and put them therein, and ourselves too climbed on board, sorrowing, and shedding big tears. And in the wake of our dark-prowed ship she sent a favouring wind that filled the sails, a kindly escort,—even Circe of the braided tresses, a dread goddess of human speech. And we set in order all the gear throughout the ship and sat us down; and the wind and the helmsman guided our barque. And all day long her sails were stretched in her seafaring; and the sun sank and all the ways were darkened.

'She came to the limits of the world, to the deep-flowing Oceanus. There is the land and the city of the Cimmerians, shrouded in mist and cloud, and never does the shining sun look down on them with his rays, neither when he climbs up the starry heavens, nor when again he turns earthward from the firmament, but deadly night is outspread over miserable mortals. Thither we came and ran the ship ashore and took out the sheep; but for our part we held on our way along the stream of Oceanus, till we came to the place which Circe had declared to us.

'There Perimedes and Eurylochus held the victims, but I drew my sharp sword from my thigh, and dug a pit, as it were a cubit in length and breadth, and about it poured a drink-offering to all the dead, first with mead and thereafter with sweet wine, and for the third time with water. And I sprinkled white meal thereon, and entreated with many prayers the strengthless heads of the dead, and promised that on my return to Ithaca I would offer in my halls a barren heifer, the best I had, and fill the pyre with treasure, and apart unto Teiresias alone sacrifice a black ram without spot, the fairest of my flock. But when I had besought the tribes of the dead with vows and prayers, I took the sheep and cut their throats over the trench, and the dark blood flowed forth, and lo, the spirits of the dead that be departed gathered them from out of Erebus. Brides and youths unwed, and old men of many and evil days, and tender maidens with grief yet fresh at heart; and many there were, wounded with bronze-shod spears, men slain in fight with their bloody mail about them. And these many ghosts flocked together from every side about the trench with a wondrous cry, and pale fear gat hold on me. Then did I speak to my company and command them to flay the sheep that lay slain by the pitiless sword, and to consume them with fire, and to make prayer to the gods, to mighty Hades and to dread Persephone, and myself I drew the sharp sword from my thigh and sat there, suffering not the strengthless heads of the dead to draw nigh to the blood, ere I had word of Teiresias.

'And first came the soul of Elpenor, my companion, that had not yet been buried beneath the wide-wayed earth; for we left the corpse behind us in the hall of Circe, unwept and unburied, seeing that another task was instant on us. At the sight of him I wept and had compassion on him, and uttering my voice spake to him winged words: "Elpenor, how hast thou come beneath the darkness and the shadow? Thou hast come fleeter on foot than I in my black ship."

'So spake I, and with a moan he answered me, saying: "Son of Laertes, of the seed of Zeus, Odysseus of many devices, an evil doom of some god was my bane and wine out of measure. When I laid me down on the house-top of Circe I minded me not to descend again by the way of the tall ladder, but fell right down from the roof, and my neck was broken off from the bones of the spine, and my spirit went down to the house of Hades. And now I pray thee in the name of those whom we left, who are no more with us, thy wife, and thy sire who cherished thee when as yet thou wert a little one, and Telemachus, whom thou didst leave in thy halls alone; forasmuch as I know that on thy way hence from out the dwelling of Hades, thou wilt stay thy well-wrought ship at the isle Aeaean, even then, my lord, I charge thee to think on me. Leave me not unwept and unburied as thou goest hence, nor turn thy back upon me, lest haply I bring on thee the anger of the gods. Nay, burn me there with mine armour, all that is mine, and pile me a barrow on the shore of the grey sea, the grave of a luckless man, that even men unborn may hear my story. Fulfil me this and plant upon the barrow mine oar, wherewith I rowed in the days of my life, while yet I was among my fellows."

'Even so he spake, and I answered him saying: "All this, luckless man, will I perform for thee and do."

'Even so we twain were sitting holding sad discourse, I on the one side, stretching forth my sword over the blood, while on the other side the ghost of my friend told all his tale.

'Anon came up the soul of my mother dead, Anticleia, the daughter of Autolycus the great-hearted, whom I left alive when I departed for sacred Ilios. At the sight of her I wept, and was moved with compassion, yet even so, for all my sore grief, I suffered her not to draw nigh to the blood ere I had word of Teiresias.

'Anon came the soul of Theban Teiresias, with a golden sceptre in his hand, and he knew me and spake unto me: "Son of Laertes, of the seed of Zeus, Odysseus of many devices, what seekest thou *now*, wretched man, wherefore hast thou left the sunlight and come hither to behold the dead and a land desolate of joy? Nay, hold off from the ditch and draw back thy sharp sword, that I may drink of the blood and tell thee sooth."

' So spake he and I put up my silver-studded sword into the sheath, and when he had drunk the dark blood, even then did the noble seer speak unto me, saying: " Thou art asking of thy sweet returning, great Odysseus, but that will the god make hard for thee; for methinks thou shalt not pass unheeded by the Shaker of the Earth, who hath laid up wrath in his heart against thee, for rage at the blinding of his dear son. Yet even so, through many troubles, ye may come home, if thou wilt restrain thy spirit and the spirit of thy men so soon as thou shalt bring thy well-wrought ship nigh to the isle Thrinacia, fleeing the sea of violet blue, when ye find the herds of Helios grazing and his brave flocks, of Helios who overseeth all and overheareth all things. If thou doest these no hurt, being heedful of thy return, so may ye yet reach Ithaca, albeit in evil case. But if thou hurtest them, I foreshow ruin for thy ship and for thy men, and even though thou shalt thyself escape, late shalt thou return in evil plight, with the loss of all thy company, on board the ship of strangers, and thou shalt find sorrows in thy house, even proud men that devour thy living, while they woo thy godlike wife and offer the gifts of wooing. Yet I tell thee, on thy coming thou shalt avenge their violence. But when thou hast slain the wooers in thy halls, whether by guile, or openly with the edge of the sword, thereafter go thy way, taking with thee a shapen oar, till thou shalt come to such men as know not the sea, neither eat meat savoured with salt; yea, nor have they knowledge of ships of purple cheek, nor shapen oars which serve for wings to ships. And I will give thee a most manifest token, which cannot escape thee. In the day when another wayfarer shall meet thee and say that thou hast a winnowing fan on thy stout shoulder, even then make fast thy shapen oar in the earth and do goodly sacrifice to the lord Poseidon, even with a ram and a bull and a boar, the mate of swine, and depart for home and offer holy hecatombs to the deathless gods that keep the wide heaven, to each in order due. And from the sea shall thine own death come, the gentlest death that may be, which shall end thee foredone with smooth old age, and the folk shall dwell happily around thee. This that I say is sooth."

'So spake he, and I answered him, saying: "Teiresias, all these threads, methinks, the gods themselves have spun, But come, declare me this and plainly tell me all. I see here the spirit of my mother dead; lo, she sits in silence near the blood, nor deigns to look her son in the face nor speak to him! Tell me, prince, how may she know me again that I am he?"

'So spake I, and anon he answered me, and said: "I will tell thee an easy saying, and will put it in thy heart. Whomsoever of the dead that be departed thou shalt suffer to draw nigh to the blood, he shall tell thee sooth; but if thou shalt grudge any, that one shall go to his own place again." Therewith the spirit of the prince Teiresias went back within the house of Hades, when he had told all his oracles. But I abode there steadfastly, till my mother drew nigh and drank the dark blood; and at once she knew me, and bewailing herself spake to me winged words:

'"Dear child, how didst thou come beneath the darkness and the shadow, thou that art a living man? Grievous is the sight of these things to the living, for between us and you are great rivers and dreadful streams; first, Oceanus, which can no wise be crossed on foot, but only if one have a well-wrought ship. Art thou but now come hither with thy ship and thy company in thy long wanderings from Troy? and hast thou not yet reached Ithaca, nor seen thy wife in thy halls?"

'Even so she spake, and I answered her, and said: "O my mother, necessity was on me to come down to the house of Hades to seek to the spirit of Theban Teiresias. For not yet have I drawn near to the Achaean shore, nor yet have I set foot on mine own country, but have been wandering evermore in affliction, from the day that first I went with goodly Agamemnon to Ilios of the fair steeds, to do battle with the Trojans. But come, declare me this and plainly tell it all. What doom overcame thee of death that lays men at their length? Was it a slow disease, or did Artemis the archer slay thee with the visitation of her gentle shafts? And tell me of my father and my son, that I left behind me; doth my honour yet abide with them, or hath another already taken it, while they say that I shall come home no more? And tell me of my wedded wife, of her counsel and her purpose, doth she abide with her son and keep all secure, or hath she already wedded the best of the Achaeans?"

'Even so I spake, and anon my lady mother answered me: "Yea verily, she abideth with steadfast spirit in thy halls; and wearily for her the nights wane always and the days in shedding of tears. But the fair honour that is thine no man hath yet taken; but Telemachus sits at peace on his demesne, and feasts at equal banquets, whereof it is meet that a judge partake, for all men bid him to their house. And thy father abides there in the field, and goes not down to the town, nor lies he on bedding or rugs or shining blankets, but all the winter he sleeps, where sleep the thralls in the house, in the ashes by the fire, and is clad in sorry raiment. But when the summer comes and the rich harvest-tide, his beds of fallen leaves are strewn lowly all about the knoll of his vineyard plot. There he lies sorrowing and nurses his mighty grief, for long desire of thy return, and old age withal comes heavy upon him. Yea and even so did I too perish and meet my doom. It was not the archer goddess of the keen sight, who slew me in my halls with the visitation of her gentle shafts, nor did any sickness come upon me, such as chiefly with a sad wasting draws the spirit from the limbs; nay, it was my sore longing for thee, and for thy counsels, great Odysseus, and for thy loving-kindness, that reft me of sweet life."

'So spake she, and I mused in my heart and would fain have embraced the spirit of my mother dead. Thrice I sprang towards her, and was minded to embrace her; thrice she flitted from my hands as a shadow or even as a dream, and grief waxed ever the sharper at my heart. And uttering my voice I spake to her winged words:

'"Mother mine, wherefore dost thou not abide me who am eager to clasp thee, that even in Hades we twain may cast our arms each about the other, and have our fill of chill lament? Is this but a phantom that the high goddess Persephone hath sent me, to the end that I may groan for more exceeding sorrow?"

'So spake I, and my lady mother answered me anon: "Ah me, my child, of all men most ill-fated, Persephone, the daughter of Zeus, doth in no wise deceive thee, but even on this wise it is with mortals when they die. For the sinews no more bind together the flesh and the bones, but the great force of burning fire abolishes these, so soon as the life hath left the white bones, and the spirit like a dream flies forth and hovers near. But haste with all thine heart toward the sunlight, and mark all this, that even hereafter thou mayest tell it to thy wife."

'Thus we twain held discourse together; and lo, the women came up, for the high goddess Persephone sent them forth, all they that had been the wives and daughters of mighty men. And they gathered and flocked about the black blood, and I took counsel how I might question them each one. And this was the counsel that showed best in my sight. I drew my long hanger from my stalwart thigh, and suffered them not all at one time to drink of the dark blood. So they drew nigh one by one, and each declared her lineage, and I made question of all.

'Then verily did I first see Tyro, sprung of a noble sire, who said that she was the child of noble Salmoneus, and declared herself the wife of Cretheus, son of Aeolus. She loved a river, the divine Enipeus, far the fairest of the floods that run upon the earth, and she would resort to the fair streams of Enipeus. And it came to pass that the girdler of the world, the Earth-shaker, put on the shape of the god, and lay by the lady at the mouths of the whirling stream. Then the dark wave stood around them like a hill-side bowed, and hid the god and the mortal woman. And he undid her maiden girdle, and shed a slumber over her. Now when the god had done the work of love, he clasped her hand and spake and hailed her:

'"Woman, be glad in our love, and when the year comes round thou shalt give birth to glorious children,—for not weak are the embraces of the gods,—and do thou keep and cherish them. And now go home and hold thy peace, and tell it not: but behold, I am Poseidon, shaker of the earth."

'Therewith he plunged beneath the heaving deep. And she conceived and bare Pelias and Neleus, who both grew to be mighty men, servants of Zeus. Pelias dwelt in wide Iolcos, and was rich in flocks; and that other abode in sandy Pylos. And the queen of women bare yet other sons to Cretheus, even Aeson and Pheres and Amythaon, whose joy was in chariots.

'And after her I saw Antiope, daughter of Asôpus, and her boast was that she had slept even in the arms of Zeus, and she bare two sons, Amphion and Zethus, who founded first the place of seven-gated Thebes, and they made of it a fenced city, for they might not dwell in spacious Thebes unfenced, for all their valiancy.

'Next to her I saw Alcmene, wife of Amphitryon, who lay in the arms of mighty Zeus, and bare Heracles of the lion-heart, steadfast in the fight. And I saw Megara, daughter of Creon, haughty of heart, whom the strong and tireless son of Amphitryon had to wife.

'And I saw the mother of Oedipodes, fair Epicaste, who wrought a dread deed unwittingly, being wedded to her own son, and he that had slain his own father wedded her, and straightway the gods made these things known to men. Yet he abode in pain in pleasant Thebes, ruling the Cadmaeans, by reason of the deadly counsels of the gods. But she went down to the house of Hades, the mighty warder; yea, she tied a noose from the high beam aloft, being fast holden in sorrow; while for him she left pains behind full many, even all that the Avengers of a mother bring to pass.

'And I saw lovely Chloris, whom Neleus wedded on a time for her beauty, and brought gifts of wooing past number. She was the youngest daughter of Amphion, son of Iasus, who once ruled mightily in Minyan Orchomenus. And she was queen of Pylos, and bare glorious children to her lord, Nestor and Chromius, and princely Periclymenus, and stately Pero too, the wonder of all men. All that dwelt around were her wooers; but Neleus would not give her, save to him who should drive off from Phylace the kine of mighty Iphicles, with shambling gait and broad of brow, hard cattle to drive. And none but the noble seer [Melampus] took in hand to drive them; but a grievous fate from the gods fettered him, even hard bonds and the herdsmen of the wild. But when at length the months and days were being fulfilled, as the year returned upon his course, and the seasons came round, then did mighty Iphicles set him free, when he had spoken out all the oracles; and herein was the counsel of Zeus being accomplished.

'And I saw Lede, the famous bed-fellow of Tyndareus, who bare to Tyndareus two sons, hardy of heart, Castor tamer of steeds, and Polydeuces the boxer. These twain yet live, but the quickening earth is over them; and even in the nether world they have honour at the hand of Zeus. And they possess their life in turn, living one day and dying the next, and they have gotten worship even as the gods.

'And after her I beheld Iphimedeia, bed-fellow of Aloeus, who said that she had lain with Poseidon, and she bare children twain, but short of life were they, godlike Otus and far-famed Ephialtes. Now these were the tallest men that earth, the graingiver, ever reared, and far the goodliest after the renowned Orion. At nine seasons old they were of breadth nine cubits, and nine fathoms in height. They it was who threatened to raise even against the immortals in Olympus the din of stormy war. They strove to pile Ossa on Olympus, and on Ossa Pelion with the trembling forest leaves, that there might be a pathway to the sky. Yea, and they would have accomplished it, had they reached the full measure of manhood. But the son of Zeus, whom Leto of the fair locks bare, destroyed the twain, ere the down had bloomed beneath their temples, and darkened their chins with the blossom of youth.

'And Phaedra and Procris I saw, and fair Ariadne, the daughter of wizard Minos, whom Theseus on a time was bearing from Crete to the hill of sacred Athens, yet had he no joy of her; for Artemis slew her ere that in sea-girt Dia, by reason of the witness of Dionysus.

'And Maera and Clymene I saw, and hateful Eriphyle, who took fine gold for the price of her dear lord's life. But I cannot tell or name all the wives and daughters of the heroes that I saw; ere that, the immortal night would wane. Nay, it is even now time to sleep, whether I go to the swift ship to my company or abide here: and for my convoy you and the gods will care.'

So spake he, and dead silence fell on all, and they were spell-bound throughout the shadowy halls. Then Arete of the white arms first spake among them: 'Phaeacians, what think you of this man for comeliness and stature, and within for wisdom of heart? Moreover he is my guest, though every one of you hath his share in this honour. Wherefore haste not to send him hence, and stint not these your gifts for one that stands in such sore need of them; for ye have much treasure stored in your halls by the grace of the gods.'

Then too spake among them the old man, lord Echeneus, that was an elder among the Phaeacians: 'Friends, behold, the speech of our wise queen is not wide of the mark, nor far from our deeming, so hearken ye thereto. But on Alcinous here both word and work depend.'

Then Alcinous made answer, and spake unto him: 'Yea, the word that she hath spoken shall hold, if indeed I am yet to live and bear rule among the Phaeacians, masters of the oar. Howbeit let the stranger, for all his craving to return, nevertheless endure to abide until the morrow, till I make up the full measure of the gift; and men shall care for his convoy, all men, but I in chief, for mine is the lordship in the land.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered him, saying: 'My lord Alcinous, most notable of all the people, if ye bade me tarry here even for a year, and would speed my convoy and give me splendid gifts, even that I would choose; and better would it be for me to come with a fuller hand to mine own dear country, so should I get more love and worship in the eyes of all men, whoso should see me after I was returned to Ithaca.'

And Alcinous answered him, saying: 'Odysseus, in no wise do we deem thee, we that look on thee, to be a knave or a cheat, even as the dark earth rears many such broadcast, fashioning lies whence none can even see his way therein. But beauty crowns thy words, and wisdom is within thee; and thy tale, as when a minstrel sings, thou hast told with skill, the weary woes of all the Argives and of thine own self. But come, declare me this and plainly tell it all. Didst thou see any of thy godlike company who went up at the same time with thee to Ilios and there met their doom? Behold, the night is of great length, unspeakable, and the time for sleep in the hall is not yet; tell me therefore of those wondrous deeds. I could abide even till the bright dawn, so long as thou couldst endure to rehearse me these woes of thine in the hall.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered him, saying: 'My lord Alcinous, most notable of all the people, there is a time for many words and there is a time for sleep. But if thou art eager still to listen, I would not for my part grudge to tell thee of other things more pitiful still, even the woes of my comrades, those that perished afterward, for they had escaped with their lives from the dread war-cry of the Trojans, but perished in returning by the will of an evil woman.

'Now when holy Persephone had scattered this way and that the spirits of the women folk, thereafter came the soul of Agamemnon, son of Atreus, sorrowing; and round him others were gathered, the ghosts of them who had died with him in the house of Aegisthus and met their doom. And he knew me straightway when he had drunk the dark blood, yea, and he wept aloud, and shed big tears as he stretched forth his hands in his longing to reach me. But it might not be, for he had now no steadfast strength nor power at all to move, such as was aforetime in his supple limbs.

'At the sight of him I wept and was moved with compassion, and uttering my voice, spake to him winged words: "Most renowned son of Atreus, Agamemnon, king of men, say what doom overcame thee of death that lays men at their length? Did Poseidon smite thee in thy ships, raising the dolorous blast of contrary winds, or did unfriendly men do thee hurt upon the land, whilst thou wert cutting off their oxen and fair flocks of sheep, or fighting to win a city and the women thereof?"

'So spake I, and straightway he answered, and said unto me: "Son of Laertes, of the seed of Zeus, Odysseus of many devices, it was not Poseidon that smote me in my ships, and raised the dolorous blast of contrary winds, nor did unfriendly men do me hurt upon the land, but Aegisthus it was that wrought me death and doom and slew me, with the aid of my accursed wife, as one slays an ox at the stall, after he had bidden me to his house, and entertained me at a feast. Even so I died by a death most pitiful, and round me my company likewise were slain without ceasing, like swine with glittering tusks which are slaughtered in the house of a rich and mighty man, whether at a wedding banquet or a joint-feast or a rich clan-drinking. Ere now hast thou been at the slaying of many a man, killed in single fight or in strong battle, yet thou wouldst have sorrowed the most at this sight, how we lay in the hall round the mixing-bowl and the laden boards, and the floor all ran with blood. And most pitiful of all that I heard was the voice of the daughter of Priam, of Cassandra, whom hard by me the crafty Clytemnestra slew. Then I strove to raise my hands as I was dying upon the sword, but to earth they fell. And that shameless one turned her back upon me, and had not the heart to draw down my eyelids with her fingers nor to close my mouth. So surely is there nought more terrible and shameless than a woman who imagines such evil in her heart, even as she too planned a foul deed, fashioning death for her gentle lord. Verily I had thought to come home most welcome to my children and my thralls; but she, out of the depth of her evil knowledge, hath shed shame on herself and on all womankind, which shall be for ever, even on the upright."

'Even so he spake, but I answered him, saying: "Lo now, in very sooth, hath Zeus of the far-borne voice wreaked wondrous hatred on the seed of Atreus through the counsels of woman from of old. For Helen's sake so many of us perished, and now Clytemnestra hath practised treason against thee, while yet thou wast afar off."

'Even so I spake, and anon he answered me, saying: "Wherefore do thou too, never henceforth be soft even to thy wife, neither show her all the counsel that thou knowest, but a part declare and let part be hid. Yet shalt not thou, Odysseus, find death at the hand of thy wife, for she is very discreet and prudent in all her ways, the wise Penelope, daughter of Icarius. Verily we left her a bride new wed when we went to the war, and a child was at her breast, who now, methinks, sits in the ranks of men, happy in his lot, for his dear father shall behold him on his coming, and he shall embrace his sire as is meet. But as for my wife, she suffered me not so much as to have my fill of gazing on my son; ere that she slew me, even her lord. And yet another thing will I tell thee, and do thou ponder it in thy heart. Put thy ship to land in secret, and not openly, on the shore of the dear country; for there is no more faith in woman. But come, declare me this and plainly tell it all, if haply ye hear of my son as yet living, either, it may be, in Orchomenus or in sandy Pylos, or perchance with Menelaus in wide Sparta, for goodly Orestes hath not yet perished on the earth."

'Even so he spake, but I answered him, saying: "Son of Atreus, wherefore dost thou ask me straitly of these things? Nay I know not at all, whether he be alive or dead; it is ill to speak words light as wind."

'Thus we twain stood sorrowing, holding sad discourse, while the big tears fell fast: and therewithal came the soul of Achilles, son of Peleus, and of Patroclus and of noble Antilochus and of Aias, who in face and form was goodliest of all the Danaans, after the noble son of Peleus. And the spirit of the son of Aeacus, fleet of foot, knew me again, and making lament spake to me winged words:

'"Son of Laertes, of the seed of Zeus, Odysseus of many devices, man overbold, what new deed and hardier than this wilt thou devise in thy heart? How durst thou come down to the house of Hades, where dwell the senseless dead, the phantoms of men outworn?"

'So he spake, but I answered him: "Achilles, son of Peleus, mightiest far of the Achaeans, I am come hither to seek to Teiresias, if he may tell me any counsel, how I may come to rugged Ithaca. For not yet have I come nigh the Achaean land, nor set foot on mine own soil, but am still in evil case; while as for thee, Achilles, none other than thou wast heretofore the most blessed of men, nor shall any be hereafter. For of old, in the days of thy life, we Argives gave thee one honour with the gods, and now thou art a great prince here among the dead. Wherefore let not thy death be any grief to thee, Achilles."

'Even so I spake, and he straightway answered me, and said: "Nay, speak not comfortably to me of death, oh great Odysseus. Rather would I live on ground as the hireling of another, with a landless man who had no great livelihood, than bear sway among all the dead that be departed. But come, tell me tidings of that lordly son of mine—did he follow to the war to be a leader or not? And tell me of noble Peleus, if thou hast heard aught,—is he yet held in worship among the Myrmidons, or do they dishonour him from Hellas to Phthia, for that old age binds him hand and foot? For I am no longer his champion under the sun, so mighty a man as once I was, when in wide Troy I slew the best of the host, and succoured the Argives. Ah! could I but come for an hour to my father's house as then I was, so would I make my might and hands invincible, to be hateful to many an one of those who do him despite and keep him from his honour."

'Even so he spake, but I answered him saying: "As for noble Peleus, verily I have heard nought of him; but concerning thy dear son Neoptolemus, I will tell thee all the truth, according to thy word. It was I that led him up out of Scyros in my good hollow ship, in the wake of the goodly-greaved Achaeans. Now oft as we took counsel around Troy town, he was ever the first to speak, and no word missed the mark; the godlike Nestor and I alone surpassed him. But whensoever we Achaeans did battle on the plain of Troy, he never tarried behind in the throng or the press of men, but ran out far before us all, yielding to none in that might of his. And many men he slew in warfare dread; but I could not tell of all or name their names, even all the host he slew in succouring the Argives, save only how he smote with the sword that son of Telephus, the hero Eurypylus, and many Ceteians of his company were slain around him, by reason of a woman's bribe. He truly was the comeliest man that ever I saw, next to goodly Memnon. And again when we, the best of the Argives, were about to go down into the horse which Epeus wrought, and the charge of all was laid on me, both to open the door of our good ambush and to shut the same, then did the other princes and counsellors of the Danaans wipe away the tears, and the limbs of each one trembled beneath him, but never once did I see thy son's fair face wax pale, nor did he wipe the tears from his cheeks: but he besought me often to let him go forth from the horse, and kept handling his sword-hilt, and his heavy bronze-shod spear, and he was set on mischief against the Trojans. But after we had sacked the steep city of Priam, he embarked unscathed with his share of the spoil, and with a noble prize; he was not smitten with the sharp spear, and got no wound in close fight: and many such chances there be in war, for Ares rageth confusedly."

'So I spake, and the spirit of the son of Aeacus, fleet of foot, passed with great strides along the mead of asphodel, rejoicing in that I had told him of his son's renown.

'But lo, other spirits of the dead that be departed stood sorrowing, and each one asked of those that were dear to them. The soul of Aias son of Telamon, alone stood apart being still angry for the victory wherein I prevailed against him, in the suit by the ships concerning the arms of Achilles, that his lady mother had set for a prize; and the sons of the Trojans made award and Pallas Athene. Would that I had never prevailed and won such a prize! So goodly a head hath the earth closed over, for the sake of those arms, even over Aias, who in beauty and in feats of war was of a mould above all the other Danaans, next to the noble son of Peleus. To him then I spake softly, saying:

'"Aias, son of noble Telamon, so art thou not even in death to forget thy wrath against me, by reason of those arms accursed, which the gods set to be the bane of the Argives? What a tower of strength fell in thy fall, and we Achaeans cease not to sorrow for thee, even as for the life of Achilles, son of Peleus! Nay, there is none other to blame, but Zeus, who hath borne wondrous hate to the army of the Danaan spearmen, and laid on thee thy doom. Nay, come hither, my lord, that thou mayest hear my word and my speech; master thy wrath and thy proud spirit."

'So I spake, but he answered me not a word and passed to Erebus after the other spirits of the dead that be departed. Even then, despite his anger, would he have spoken to me or I to him, but my heart within me was minded to see the spirits of those others that were departed.

'There then I saw Minos, glorious son of Zeus, wielding a golden sceptre, giving sentence from his throne to the dead, while they sat and stood around the prince, asking his dooms through the wide-gated house of Hades.

'And after him I marked the mighty Orion driving the wild beasts together over the mead of asphodel, the very beasts that himself had slain on the lonely hills, with a strong mace all of bronze in his hands, that is ever unbroken.

'And I saw Tityos, son of renowned Earth, lying on a levelled ground, and he covered nine roods as he lay, and vultures twain beset him one on either side, and gnawed at his liver, piercing even to the caul, but he drave them not away with his hands. For he had dealt violently with Leto, the famous bedfellow of Zeus, as she went up to Pythe through the fair lawns of Panopeus.

'Moreover I beheld Tantalus in grievous torment, standing in a mere and the water came nigh unto his chin. And he stood straining as one athirst, but he might not attain to the water to drink of it. For often as that old man stooped down in his eagerness to drink, so often the water was swallowed up and it vanished away, and the black earth still showed at his feet, for some god parched it evermore. And tall trees flowering shed their fruit overhead, pears and pomegranates and apple trees with bright fruit, and sweet figs and olives in their bloom, whereat when that old man reached out his hands to clutch them, the wind would toss them to the shadowy clouds.

'Yea and I beheld Sisyphus in strong torment, grasping a monstrous stone with both his hands. He was pressing thereat with hands and feet, and trying to roll the stone upward toward the brow of the hill. But oft as he was about to hurl it over the top, the weight would drive him back, so once again to the plain rolled the stone, the shameless thing. And he once more kept heaving and straining, and the sweat the while was pouring down his limbs, and the dust rose upwards from his head.

'And after him I descried the mighty Heracles, his phantom, I say; but as for himself he hath joy at the banquet among the deathless gods, and hath to wife Hebe of the fair ankles, child of great Zeus, and of Here of the golden sandals. And all about him there was a clamour of the dead, as it were fowls flying every way in fear, and he like black Night, with bow uncased, and shaft upon the string, fiercely glancing around, like one in the act to shoot. And about his breast was an awful belt, a baldric of gold, whereon wondrous things were wrought, bears and wild boars and lions with flashing eyes, and strife and battles and slaughters and murders of men. Nay, now that he hath fashioned this, never another may he fashion, whoso stored in his craft the device of that belt! And anon he knew me when his eyes beheld me, and making lament he spake unto me winged words:

'"Son of Laertes, of the seed of Zeus, Odysseus of many devices: ah! wretched one, dost thou too lead such a life of evil doom, as I endured beneath the rays of the sun? I was the son of Zeus Cronion, yet had I trouble beyond measure, for I was subdued unto a man far worse than I. And he enjoined on me hard adventures, yea and on a time he sent me hither to bring back the hound of hell; for he devised no harder task for me than this. I lifted the hound and brought him forth from out of the house of Hades; and Hermes sped me on my way and the grey-eyed Athene."

'Therewith he departed again into the house of Hades, but I abode there still, if perchance some one of the hero folk besides might come, who died in old time. Yea and I should have seen the men of old, whom I was fain to look on, Theseus and Peirithous, renowned children of the gods. But ere that might be the myriad tribes of the dead thronged up together with wondrous clamour: and pale fear gat hold of me, lest the high goddess Persephone should send me the head of the Gorgon, that dread monster, from out of Hades.

'Straightway then I went to the ship, and bade my men mount the vessel, and loose the hawsers. So speedily they went on board, and sat upon the benches. And the wave of the flood bore the barque down the stream of Oceanus, we rowing first, and afterwards the fair wind was our convoy.'

BOOK XII

Odysseus, his passage by the Sirens, and by Scylla and Charybdis. The sacrilege committed by his men in the isle Thrinacia. The destruction of his ships and men. How he swam on a plank nine days together, and came to Ogygia, where he stayed seven years with Calypso.

'Now after the ship had left the stream of the river Oceanus, and was come to the wave of the wide sea, and the isle Aeaean, where is the dwelling place of early Dawn and her dancing grounds, and the land of sunrising, upon our coming thither we beached the ship in the sand, and ourselves too stept ashore on the sea beach. There we fell on sound sleep and awaited the bright Dawn.

'So soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, I sent forth my fellows to the house of Circe to fetch the body of the dead Elpenor. And speedily we cut billets of wood and sadly we buried him, where the furthest headland runs out into the sea, shedding big tears. But when the dead man was burned and the arms of the dead, we piled a barrow and dragged up thereon a pillar, and on the topmost mound we set the shapen oar.

'Now all that task we finished, and our coming from out of Hades was not unknown to Circe, but she arrayed herself and speedily drew nigh, and her handmaids with her bare flesh and bread in plenty and dark red wine. And the fair goddess stood in the midst and spake in our ears, saying:

'"Men overbold, who have gone alive into the house of Hades, to know death twice, while all men else die once for all. Nay come, eat ye meat and drink wine here all day long; and with the breaking of the day ye shall set sail, and myself I will show you the path and declare each thing, that ye may not suffer pain or hurt through any grievous ill-contrivance by sea or on the land."

'So spake she, and our lordly souls consented thereto. Thus for that time we sat the livelong day, until the going down of the sun, feasting on abundant flesh and on sweet wine. Now when the sun sank and darkness came on, my company laid them to rest by the hawsers of the ship. Then she took me by the hand and led me apart from my dear company, and made me to sit down and laid herself at my feet, and asked all my tale. And I told her all in order duly. Then at the last the lady Circe spake unto me, saying:

'"Even so, now all these things have an end; do thou then hearken even as I tell thee, and the god himself shall bring it back to thy mind. To the Sirens first shalt thou come, who bewitch all men, whosoever shall come to them. Whoso draws nigh them unwittingly and hears the sound of the Sirens' voice, never doth he see wife or babes stand by him on his return, nor have they joy at his coming; but the Sirens enchant him with their clear song, sitting in the meadow, and all about is a great heap of bones of men, corrupt in death, and round the bones the skin is wasting. But do thou drive thy ship past, and knead honey-sweet wax, and anoint therewith the ears of thy company, lest any of the rest hear the song; but if thou thyself art minded to hear, let them bind thee in the swift ship hand and foot, upright in the mast-stead, and from the mast let rope-ends be tied, that with delight thou mayest hear the voice of the Sirens. And if thou shalt beseech thy company and bid them to loose thee, then let them bind thee with yet more bonds. But when thy friends have driven thy ship past these, I will not tell thee fully which path shall thenceforth be thine, but do thou thyself consider it, and I will speak to thee of either way. On the one side there are beetling rocks, and against them the great wave roars of dark-eyed Amphitrite. These, ye must know, are they the blessed gods call the Rocks Wandering. By this way even winged things may never pass, nay, not even the cowering doves that bear ambrosia to Father Zeus, but the sheer rock evermore takes away one even of these, and the Father sends in another to make up the tale. Thereby no ship of men ever escapes that comes thither, but the planks of ships and the bodies of men confusedly are tossed by the waves of the sea and the storms of ruinous fire. One ship only of all that fare by sea hath passed that way, even Argo, that is in all men's minds, on her voyage from Æetes. And even her the wave would lightly have cast there upon the mighty rocks, but Here sent her by for love of Jason.

' "On the other part are two rocks, whereof the one reaches with sharp peak to the wide heaven, and a dark cloud encompasses it; this never streams away, and there is no clear air about the peak neither in summer nor in harvest tide. No mortal man may scale it or set foot thereon, not though he had twenty hands and feet. For the rock is smooth, and sheer, as it were polished. And in the midst of the cliff is a dim cave turned to Erebus, towards the place of darkness, whereby ye shall even steer your hollow ship, noble Odysseus. Not with an arrow from a bow might a man in his strength reach from his hollow ship into that deep cave. And therein dwelleth Scylla, yelping terribly. Her voice indeed is no greater than the voice of a new-born whelp, but a dreadful monster is she, nor would any look on her gladly, not if it were a god that met her. Verily she hath twelve feet all dangling down, and six necks exceeding long, and on each a hideous head, and therein three rows of teeth set thick and close, full of black death. Up to her middle is she sunk far down in the hollow cave, but forth she holds her heads from the dreadful gulf, and there she fishes, swooping round the rock, for dolphins or sea-dogs, or whatso greater beast she may anywhere take, whereof the deep voiced Amphitrite feeds countless flocks. Thereby no sailors boast that they have fled scatheless ever with their ship, for with each head she carries of a man, whom she hath snatched from out the dark-prowed ship.

'"But that other cliff, Odysseus, thou shalt note, lying lower, hard by the first: thou couldest send an arrow across. And thereon is a great fig-tree growing, in fullest leaf, and beneath it mighty Charybdis sucks down black water, for thrice a day she spouts it forth, and thrice a day she sucks it down in terrible wise. Never mayest thou be there when she sucks the water, for none might save thee then from thy bane, not even the Earth-shaker! But take heed and swiftly drawing nigh to Scylla's rock drive the ship past, since of a truth it is far better to mourn six of thy company in the ship, than all in the selfsame hour."

'So spake she, but I answered, and said unto her: "Come I pray thee herein, goddess, tell me true, if there be any means whereby I might escape from the deadly Charybdis and avenge me on that other, when she would prey upon my company."

'So spake I, and that fair goddess answered me: "Man overbold, lo, now again the deeds of war are in thy mind and the travail thereof. Wilt thou not yield thee even to the deathless gods? As for her, she is no mortal, but an immortal plague, dread, grievous, and fierce, and not to be fought with; and against her there is no defence; flight is the bravest way. For if thou tarry to do on thine armour by the cliff, I fear lest once again she sally forth and catch at thee with so many heads, and seize as many men as before. So drive past with all thy force, and call on Cratais, mother of Scylla, which bore her for a bane to mortals. And she will then let her from darting forth thereafter.

'"Then thou shalt come unto the isle Thrinacia; there are the many kine of Helios and his brave flocks feeding, seven herds of kine and as many goodly flocks of sheep, and fifty in each flock. They have no part in birth or in corruption, and there are goddesses to shepherd them, nymphs with fair tresses, Phaethusa and Lampetie whom bright Neaera bare to Helios Hyperion. Now when the lady their mother had borne and nursed them, she carried them to the isle Thrinacia to dwell afar, that they should guard their father's flocks and his kine with shambling gait. If thou doest these no hurt, being heedful of thy return, truly ye may even yet reach Ithaca, albeit in evil case. But if thou hurtest them, I foreshow ruin for thy ship and for thy men, and even though thou shouldest thyself escape, late shalt thou return in evil plight with the loss of all thy company."

'So spake she, and anon came the golden-throned Dawn. Then the fair goddess took her way up the island. But I departed to my ship and roused my men themselves to mount the vessel and loose the hawsers. And speedily they went aboard and sat upon the benches, and sitting orderly smote the grey sea water with their oars. And in the wake of our dark-prowed ship she sent a favouring wind that filled the sails, a kindly escort,—even Circe of the braided tresses, a dread goddess of human speech. And straightway we set in order the gear throughout the ship and sat us down and the wind and the helmsman guided our barque.

'Then I spake among my company with a heavy heart: "Friends, forasmuch as it is not well that one or two alone should know of the oracles that Circe, the fair goddess, spake unto me, therefore will I declare them, that with foreknowledge we may die, or haply shunning death and destiny escape. First she bade us avoid the sound of the voice of the wondrous Sirens, and their field of flowers, and me only she bade listen to their voices. So bind ye me in a hard bond, that I may abide unmoved in my place, upright in the mast-stead, and from the mast let rope-ends be tied, and if I beseech and bid you to set me free, then do ye straiten me with yet more bonds."

'Thus I rehearsed these things one and all, and declared them to my company. Meanwhile our good ship quickly came to the island of the Sirens twain, for a gentle breeze sped her on her way. Then straightway the wind ceased, and lo, there was a windless calm, and some god lulled the waves. Then my company rose up and drew in the ship's sails, and stowed them in the hold of the ship, while they sat at the oars and whitened the water with their polished pine blades. But I with my sharp sword cleft in pieces a great circle of wax, and with my strong hands kneaded it. And soon the wax grew warm, for that my great might constrained it, and the beam of the lord Helios, son of Hyperion. And I anointed therewith the ears of all my men in their order, and in the ship they bound me hand and foot upright in the mast-stead, and from the mast they fastened rope-ends and themselves sat down, and smote the grey sea water with their oars. But when the ship was within the sound of a man's shout from the land, we fleeing swiftly on our way, the Sirens espied the swift ship speeding toward them, and they raised their clear-toned song:

'"Hither, come hither, renowned Odysseus, great glory of the Achaeans, here stay thy barque, that thou mayest listen to the voice of us twain. For none hath ever driven by this way in his black ship, till he hath heard from our lips the voice sweet as the honeycomb, and hath had joy thereof and gone on his way the wiser. For lo, we know all things, all the travail that in wide Troy-land the Argives and Trojans bare by the gods' designs, yea, and we know all that shall hereafter be upon the fruitful earth."

'So spake they uttering a sweet voice, and my heart was fain to listen, and I bade my company unbind me, nodding at them with a frown, but they bent to their oars and rowed on. Then straight uprose Perimedes and Eurylochus and bound me with more cords and straitened me yet the more. Now when we had driven past them, nor heard we any longer the sound of the Sirens or their song, forthwith my dear company took away the wax wherewith I had anointed their ears and loosed me from my bonds.

'But so soon as we left that isle, thereafter presently I saw smoke and a great wave, and heard the sea roaring. Then for very fear the oars flew from their hands, and down the stream they all splashed, and the ship was holden there, for my company no longer plied with their hands the tapering oars. But I paced the ship and cheered on my men, as I stood by each one and spake smooth words:

'"Friends, forasmuch as in sorrow we are not all unlearned, truly this is no greater woe that is upon us, than when the Cyclops penned us by main might in his hollow cave; yet even thence we made escape by my manfulness, even by my counsel and my wit, and some day I think that this adventure too we shall remember. Come now, therefore, let us all give ear to do according to my word. Do ye smite the deep surf of the sea with your oars, as ye sit on the benches, if peradventure Zeus may grant us to escape from and shun this death. And as for thee, helmsman, thus I charge thee, and ponder it in thine heart seeing that thou wieldest the helm of the hollow ship. Keep the ship well away from this smoke and from the wave and hug the rocks, lest the ship, ere thou art aware, start from her course to the other side, and so thou hurl us into ruin."

'So I spake, and quickly they hearkened to my words. But of Scylla I told them nothing more, a bane none might deal with, lest haply my company should cease from rowing for fear, and hide them in the hold. In that same hour I suffered myself to forget the hard behest of Circe, in that she bade me in nowise be armed; but I did on my glorious harness and caught up two long lances in my hands, and went on to the decking of the prow, for thence methought that Scylla of the rock would first be seen, who was to bring woe on my company. Yet could I not spy her anywhere, and my eyes waxed weary for gazing all about toward the darkness of the rock.

'Next we began to sail up the narrow strait lamenting. For on the one hand lay Scylla, and on the other mighty Charybdis in terrible wise sucked down the salt sea water. As often as she belched it forth, like a cauldron on a great fire she would seethe up through all her troubled deeps, and overhead the spray fell on the tops of either cliff. But oft as she gulped down the salt sea water, within she was all plain to see through her troubled deeps, and the rock around roared horribly and beneath the earth was manifest swart with sand, and pale fear gat hold on my men. Toward her, then, we looked fearing destruction; but Scylla meanwhile caught from out my hollow ship six of my company, the hardiest of their hands and the chief in might. And looking into the swift ship to find my men, even then I marked their feet and hands as they were lifted on high, and they cried aloud in their agony, and called me by my name for that last time of all. Even as when a fisher on some headland lets down with a long rod his baits for a snare to the little fishes below, casting into the deep the horn of an ox of the homestead, and as he catches each flings it writhing ashore, so writhing were they borne upward to the cliff. And there she devoured them shrieking in her gates, they stretching forth their hands to me in the dread death-struggle. And the most pitiful thing was this that mine eyes have seen of all my travail in searching out the paths of the sea.

'Now when we had escaped the Rocks and dread Charybdis and Scylla, thereafter we soon came to the fair island of the god; where were the goodly kine, broad of brow, and the many brave flocks of Helios Hyperion. Then while as yet I was in my black ship upon the deep, I heard the lowing of the cattle being stalled and the bleating of the sheep, and on my mind there fell the saying of the blind seer, Theban Teiresias, and of Circe of Aia, who charged me very straitly to shun the isle of Helios, the gladdener of the world. Then I spake out among my company in sorrow of heart:

'"Hear my words, my men, albeit in evil plight, that I may declare unto you the oracles of Teiresias and of Circe of Aia, who very straitly charged me to shun the isle of Helios, the gladdener of the world. For there she said the most dreadful mischief would befal us. Nay, drive ye then the black ship beyond and past that isle."

'So spake I, and their heart was broken within them. And Eurylochus straightway answered me sadly, saying:

'"Hardy art thou, Odysseus, of might beyond measure, and thy limbs are never weary; verily thou art fashioned all of iron, that sufferest not thy fellows, foredone with toil and drowsiness, to set foot on shore, where we might presently prepare us a good supper in this sea-girt island. But even as we are thou biddest us fare blindly through the sudden night, and from the isle go wandering on the misty deep. And strong winds, the bane of ships, are born of the night. How could a man escape from utter doom, if there chanced to come a sudden blast of the South Wind, or of the boisterous West, which mainly wreck ships, beyond the will of the gods, the lords of all? Howbeit for this present let us yield to the black night, and we will make ready our supper abiding by the swift ship, and in the morning we will climb on board, and put out into the broad deep."

'So spake Eurylochus, and the rest of my company consented thereto. Then at the last I knew that some god was indeed imagining evil, and I uttered my voice and spake unto him winged words:

'"Eurylochus, verily ye put force upon me, being but one among you all. But come, swear me now a mighty oath, one and all, to the intent that if we light on a herd of kine or a great flock of sheep, none in the evil folly of his heart may slay any sheep or ox; but in quiet eat ye the meat which the deathless Circe gave."

'So I spake, and straightway they swore to refrain as I commanded them. Now after they had sworn and done that oath, we stayed our well-builded ship in the hollow harbour near to a well of sweet water, and my company went forth from out the ship and deftly got ready supper. But when they had put from them the desire of meat and drink, thereafter they fell a weeping as they thought upon their dear companions whom Scylla had snatched from out the hollow ship and so devoured. And deep sleep came upon them amid their weeping. And when it was the third watch of the night, and the stars had crossed the zenith, Zeus the cloud-gatherer roused against them an angry wind with wondrous tempest, and shrouded in clouds land and sea alike, and from heaven sped down the night. Now when early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, we beached the ship, and dragged it up within a hollow cave, where were the fair dancing grounds of the nymphs and the places of their session. Thereupon I ordered a gathering of my men and spake in their midst, saying:

'"Friends, forasmuch as there is yet meat and drink in the swift ship, let us keep our hands off those kine, lest some evil thing befall us. For these are the kine and the brave flocks of a dread god, even of Helios, who overseeth all and overheareth all things."

'So I spake, and their lordly spirit hearkened thereto. Then for a whole month the South Wind blew without ceasing, and no other wind arose, save only the East and the South.

‘Now so long as my company still had corn and red wine, they refrained them from the kine, for they were fain of life. But when the corn was now all spent from out the ship, and they went wandering with barbed hooks in quest of game, as needs they must, fishes and fowls, whatsoever might come to their hand, for hunger gnawed at their belly, then at last I departed up the isle, that I might pray to the gods, if perchance some one of them might show me a way of returning. And now when I had avoided my company on my way through the island, I laved my hands where was a shelter from the wind, and prayed to all the gods that hold Olympus. But they shed sweet sleep upon my eyelids. And Eurylochus the while set forth an evil counsel to my company:

‘“Hear my words, my friends, though ye be in evil case. Truly every shape of death is hateful to wretched mortals, but to die of hunger and to meet doom is most pitiful of all. Nay come, we will drive off the best of the kine of Helios and will do sacrifice to the deathless gods who keep wide heaven. And if we may yet reach Ithaca, our own country, forthwith will we rear a rich shrine to Helios Hyperion, and therein would we set many a choice offering. But if he be somewhat wroth for his cattle with straight horns, and is fain to wreck our ship, and the other gods follow his desire, rather with one gulp at the wave would I cast my life away, than be slowly straitened to death in a desert isle.”

‘So spake Eurylochus, and the rest of the company consented thereto. Forthwith they drave off the best of the kine of Helios that were nigh at hand, for the fair kine of shambling gait and broad of brow were feeding no great way from the dark-prowed ship. Then they stood around the cattle and prayed to the gods, plucking the fresh leaves from an oak of lofty boughs, for they had no white barley on board the decked ship. Now after they had prayed and cut the throats of the kine and flayed them, they cut out slices of the thighs and wrapped them in the fat, making a double fold, and thereon they laid raw flesh. Yet had they no pure wine to pour over the flaming sacrifices, but they made libation with water and roasted the entrails over the fire. Now after the thighs were quite consumed and they had tasted the inner parts, they cut the rest up small and spitted it on spits. In the same hour deep sleep sped from my eyelids and I sallied forth to the swift ship and the sea-banks. But on my way as I drew near to the curved ship, the sweet savour of the fat came all about me; and I groaned and spake out before the deathless gods:

'"Father Zeus, and all ye other blessed gods that live for ever, verily to my undoing ye have lulled me with a ruthless sleep, and my company abiding behind have imagined a monstrous deed."

'Then swiftly to Helios Hyperion came Lampetie of the long robes, with the tidings that we had slain his kine. And straight he spake with angry heart amid the Immortals:

'"Father Zeus, and all ye other blessed gods that live for ever, take vengeance I pray you on the company of Odysseus, son of Laertes, that have insolently slain my cattle, wherein I was wont to be glad as I went toward the starry heaven, and when I again turned earthward from the firmament. And if they pay me not full atonement for the cattle, I will go down to Hades and shine among the dead."

'And Zeus the cloud gatherer answered him, saying: "Helios, do thou, I say, shine on amidst the deathless gods, and amid mortal men upon the earth, the grain-giver. But as for me, I will soon smite their swift ship with my white bolt, and cleave it in pieces in the midst of the wine-dark deep."

'This I heard from Calypso of the fair hair; and she said that she herself had heard it from Hermes the Messenger.

'But when I had come down to the ship and to the sea, I went up to my companions, and rebuked them one by one; but we could find no remedy, the cattle were dead and gone. And soon thereafter the gods showed forth signs and wonders to my company. The skins were creeping, and the flesh bellowing upon the spits, both the roast and raw, and there was a sound as the voice of kine.

'Then for six days my dear company feasted on the best of the kine of Helios which they had driven off. But when Zeus, son of Cronos, had added the seventh day thereto, thereafter the wind ceased to blow with a rushing storm, and at once we climbed the ship and launched into the broad deep, when we had set up the mast and hoisted the white sails.

'But now when we left that isle nor any other land appeared, but sky and sea only, even then the son of Cronos stayed a dark cloud above the hollow ship, and beneath it the deep darkened. And the ship ran on her way for no long while, for of a sudden came the shrilling West, with the rushing of a great tempest, and the blast of wind snapped the two forestays of the mast, and the mast fell backward and all the gear dropped into the bilge. And behold, on the hind part of the ship the mast struck the head of the pilot and brake all the bones of his skull together, and like a diver he dropt down from the deck, and his brave spirit left his bones. In that same hour Zeus thundered and cast his bolt upon the ship, and she reeled all over being stricken by the bolt of Zeus, and was filled with sulphur, and lo, my company fell from out the vessel. Like sea-gulls they were borne round the black ship upon the billows, and the god reft them of returning.

'But I kept pacing through my ship, till the surge loosened the sides from the keel, and the wave swept her along stript of her tackling, and brake her mast clean off at the keel. Now the backstay fashioned of an oxhide had been flung thereon; therewith I lashed together both keel and mast, and sitting thereon I was borne by the ruinous winds.

'Then verily the West Wind ceased to blow with a rushing storm, and swiftly withal the South Wind came, bringing sorrow to my soul, that so I might again measure back that space of sea, the way to deadly Charybdis. All the night was I borne, but with the rising of the sun I came to the rock of Scylla, and to dread Charybdis. Now she had sucked down her salt sea water, when I was swung up on high to the tall fig-tree whereto I clung like a bat, and could find no sure rest for my feet nor place to stand, for the roots spread far below and the branches hung aloft out of reach, long and large, and overshadowed Charybdis. Steadfast I clung till she should vomit forth mast and keel again; and late they came to my desire. At the hour when a man rises up from the assembly and goes to supper, one who judges the many quarrels of the young men that seek to him for law, at that same hour those timbers came forth to view from out Charybdis. And I let myself drop down hands and feet, and plunged heavily in the midst of the waters beyond the long timbers, and sitting on these I rowed hard with my hands. But the father of gods and of men suffered me no more to behold Scylla, else I should never have escaped from utter doom.

‘Thence for nine days was I borne, and on the tenth night the gods brought me nigh to the isle of Ogygia, where dwells Calypso of the braided tresses, an awful goddess of mortal speech, who took me in and entreated me kindly. But why rehearse all this tale? For even yesterday I told it to thee and to thy noble wife in thy house; and it liketh me not twice to tell a plain-told tale.’

BOOK XIII

Odysseus, sleeping, is set ashore at Ithaca by the Phaeacians, and waking knows it not. Pallas, in the form of a shepherd, helps to hide his treasure. The ship that conveyed him is turned into a rock, and Odysseus by Pallas is instructed what to do, and transformed into an old beggarman.

So spake he, and dead silence fell on all, and they were spell-bound throughout the shadowy halls. Thereupon Alcinous answered him, and spake, saying:

‘Odysseus, now that thou hast come to my high house with floor of bronze, never, methinks, shalt thou be driven from thy way ere thou returnest, though thou hast been sore afflicted. And for each man among you, that in these halls of mine drink evermore the dark wine of the elders, and hearken to the minstrel, this is my word and command. Garments for the stranger are already laid up in a polished coffer, with gold curiously wrought, and all other such gifts as the counsellors of the Phaeacians bare hither. Come now, let us each of us give him a tripod and a cauldron, and we in turn will gather goods among the people and get us recompense; for it were hard that one man should give without return.’

So spake Alcinous, and the saying pleased them well. Then they went each one to his house to lay him down to rest; but so soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, they hasted to the ship and bare the bronze, the joy of men. And the mighty king Alcinous himself went about the ship and diligently bestowed the gifts beneath the benches, that they might not hinder any of the crew in their rowing, when they laboured at their oars. Then they betook them to the house of Alcinous and fell to feasting. And the mighty king Alcinous sacrificed before them an ox to Zeus, the son of Cronos, that dwells in the dark clouds, who is lord of all. And when they had burnt the pieces of the thighs they shared the glorious feast and made merry, and among them harped the divine minstrel Demodocus, whom the people honoured. But Odysseus would ever turn his head toward the splendour of the sun, being fain to hasten his setting; for verily he was most eager to return. And as when a man longs for his supper, for whom all day long two dark oxen drag through the fallow field the jointed plough, yea and welcome to such an one the sunlight sinketh, that so he may get him to supper, for his knees wax faint by the way, even so welcome was the sinking of the sunlight to Odysseus. Then straight he spake among the Phaeacians, masters of the oar, and to Alcinous in chief he made known his word, saying:

'My lord Alcinous, most notable of all the people, pour ye the drink offering, and send me safe upon my way, and as for you, fare ye well. For now have I all that my heart desired, an escort and loving gifts. May the gods of heaven give me good fortune with them, and may I find my noble wife in my home with my friends unharmed, while ye, for your part, abide here and make glad your gentle wives and children; and may the gods vouchsafe all manner of good, and may no evil come nigh the people!'

So spake he, and they all consented thereto and bade send the stranger on his way, in that he had spoken aright. Then the mighty king Alcinous spake to the henchman: 'Pontonous, mix the bowl and serve out the wine to all in the hall, that we may pray to Father Zeus, and send the stranger on his way to his own country.'

So spake he, and Pontonous mixed the honey-hearted wine, and served it to all in turn. And they poured forth before the blessed gods that keep wide heaven, even there as they sat. Then goodly Odysseus uprose, and placed in Arete's hand the double cup, and uttering his voice spake to her winged words:

'Fare thee well, O queen, all the days of thy life, till old age come and death, that visit all mankind. But I go homeward, and do thou in this thy house rejoice in thy children and thy people and Alcinous the king.'

Therewith goodly Odysseus stept over the threshold. And with him the mighty Alcinous sent forth a henchman to guide him to the swift ship and the sea-banks. And Arete sent in his train certain maidens of her household, one bearing a fresh robe and a doublet, and another she joined to them to carry the strong coffer, and yet another bare bread and red wine. Now when they had come down to the ship and to the sea, straightway the good men of the escort took these things and laid them by in the hollow ship, even all the meat and drink. Then they strewed for Odysseus a rug and a sheet of linen, on the decks of the hollow ship in the hinder part thereof, that he might sleep sound. Then he too climbed aboard and laid him down in silence, while they sat upon the benches, every man in order, and unbound the hawser from the pierced stone. So soon as they leant backwards and tossed the sea water with the oar blade, a deep sleep fell upon his eyelids, a sound sleep, very sweet, and next akin to death. And even as on a plain a yoke of four stallions comes springing all together beneath the lash, leaping high and speedily accomplishing the way, so leaped the stern of that ship, and the dark wave of the sounding sea rushed mightily in the wake, and she ran ever surely on her way, nor could a circling hawk keep pace with her, of winged things the swiftest. Even thus she lightly sped and cleft the waves of the sea, bearing a man whose counsel was as the counsel of the gods, one that erewhile had suffered much sorrow of heart, in passing through the wars of men, and the grievous waves; but for that time he slept in peace, forgetful of all that he had suffered.

So when the star came up, that is brightest of all, and goes ever heralding the light of early Dawn, even then did the seafaring ship draw nigh the island. There is in the land of

Ithaca a certain haven of Phorcys, the ancient one of the sea, and thereby are two headlands of sheer cliff, which slope to the sea on the haven's side and break the mighty wave that ill winds roll without, but within, the decked ships ride unmoored when once they have attained to that landing place. Now at the harbour's head is a long-leaved olive tree, and hard by is a pleasant cave and shadowy, sacred to the nymphs, that are called the Naiads. And therein are mixing bowls and jars of stone, and there moreover do bees hive. And there are great looms of stone, whereon the nymphs weave raiment of purple stain, a marvel to behold, and therein are waters welling evermore. Two gates there are to the cave, the one set toward the North Wind whereby men may go down, but the portals toward the South pertain rather to the gods, whereby men may not enter: it is the way of the immortals.

Thither they, as having knowledge of that place, let drive their ship; and now the vessel in full course ran ashore, half her keel's length high; so well was she sped by the hands of the oarsmen. Then they alighted from the benched ship upon the land, and first they lifted Odysseus from out the hollow ship, all as he was in the sheet of linen and the bright rug, and laid him yet heavy with slumber on the sand. And they too forth the goods which the lordly Phaeacians had given him on his homeward way by grace of the great-hearted Athene. These they set in a heap by the trunk of the olive tree, a little aside from the road, lest some way-faring man, before Odysseus awakened, should come and spoil them. Then themselves departed homeward again. But the shaker of the earth forgat not the threats, wherewith at the first he had threatened godlike Odysseus, and he inquired into the counsel of Zeus, saying:

'Father Zeus, I for one shall no longer be of worship among the deathless gods, when mortal men hold me in no regard, even Phaeacians, who moreover are of mine own lineage. Lo, now I said that after much affliction Odysseus should come home, for I had no mind to rob him utterly of his return, when once thou hadst promised it and given assent; but behold, in his sleep they have borne him in a swift ship over the sea, and set him down in Ithaca, and given him gifts out of measure, bronze and gold in plenty and woven raiment, much store, such as never would Odysseus have won for himself out of Troy; yea, though he had returned unhurt with the share of the spoil that fell to him.'

And Zeus, the cloud gatherer, answered him saying: 'Lo now, shaker of the earth, of widest power, what a word hast thou spoken! The gods nowise dishonour thee; hard would it be to bring into dishonour our eldest and our best. But if any man, giving place to his own hardihood and strength, holds thee not in worship, thou hast always thy revenge for the same, even in the time to come. Do thou as thou wilt, and as seems thee good.'

Then Poseidon, shaker of the earth, answered him: 'Lightly would I have done as thou sayest, O god of the dark clouds; but always do I hold in awe and avoid thy wrath. Howbeit, now I fain would smite a fair ship of the Phaeacians, as she comes home from a convoy on the misty deep, that thereby they may learn to hold their hands, and cease from giving escort to men; and I would overshadow their city with a great mountain.'

And Zeus the gatherer of the clouds, answered him, saying: 'Friend, learn now what seems best in my sight. At an hour when the folk are all looking forth from the city at the ship upon her way, smite her into a stone hard by the land; a stone in the likeness of a swift ship, that all mankind may marvel, and do thou overshadow their city with a great mountain.'

Now when Poseidon, shaker of the earth, heard this saying, he went on his way to Scheria, where the Phaeacians dwell. There he abode awhile; and lo, she drew near, the sea-faring ship, lightly sped upon her way. Then nigh her came the shaker of the earth, and he smote her into a stone, and rooted her far below with the down-stroke of his hand; and he departed thence again.

Then one to the other they spake winged words, the Phaeacians of the long oars, mariners renowned. And thus would they speak, looking each man to his neighbour:

'Ah me! who is this that hath bound our swift ship on the deep as she drave homewards? Even now she stood all plain to view.'

Even so they would speak; but they knew not how these things were ordained. And Alcinous made harangue and spake among them:

'Lo now, in very truth the ancient oracles of my father have come home to me. He was wont to say that Poseidon was jealous of us, for that we give safe escort to all men. He said that the day would come when the god would smite a fair ship of the Phaeacians, as she came home from a convoy on the misty deep, and overshadow our city with a great mountain. Thus that ancient one would speak; and lo, all these things now have an end. But come, let us all give ear and do according to my word. Cease ye from the convoy of mortals, whensoever any shall come unto our town, and let us sacrifice to Poseidon twelve choice bulls, if perchance he may take pity, neither overshadow our city with a great mountain.'

So spake he, and they were dismayed and got ready the bulls. Thus were they praying to the lord Poseidon, the princes and counsellors of the land of the Phaeacians, as they stood about the altar.

Even then the goodly Odysseus awoke where he slept on his native land; nor knew he the same again, having now been long afar, for around him the goddess had shed a mist, even Pallas Athene, daughter of Zeus, to the end that she might make him undiscovered for that he was, and might expound to him all things, that so his wife should not know him neither his townsmen and kinsfolk, ere the wooers had paid for all their transgressions. Wherefore each thing showed strange to the lord of the land, the long paths and the sheltering havens and the steep rocks and the trees in their bloom. So he started up, and stood and looked upon his native land, and then he made moan withal, and smote on both his thighs with the down-stroke of his hands, and making lament, he spake, saying:

'Oh, woe is me, unto what mortals' land am I now come? Say, are they froward, and wild, and unjust, or hospitable and of a god-fearing mind? Whither shall I bear all this wealth? Yea where shall I myself go wandering? Oh! that it had abided with the Phaeacians where it was, and that I had gone to some other of the mighty princes, who would have entreated me kindly and sent me on my way. But now I know not where to bestow my treasure, and yet I will not leave it here behind, lest haply other men make spoil of it. Lo now, they were not wholly wise or just, the princes and counsellors of the Phaeacians, who carried me to a strange land. Verily they promised to bring me to clear-seen Ithaca, but they performed it not. May Zeus requite them, the god of suppliants, seeing that he watches over all men and punishes the transgressor! But come, I will reckon up these goods and look to them, lest the men be gone, and have taken back of their gifts upon their hollow ship.'

Therewith he set to number the fair tripods and the cauldrons and the gold and the goodly woven raiment; and of all these he lacked not aught, but he bewailed him for his own country, as he walked downcast by the shore of the sounding sea, and made sore lament. Then Athene came nigh him in the guise of a young man, the herdsman of a flock, a young man most delicate, such as are the sons of kings. And she had a well-wrought mantle that fell in two folds about her shoulders, and beneath her smooth feet she had sandals bound, and a javelin in her hands. And Odysseus rejoiced as he saw her, and came over against her, and uttering his voice spake to her winged words:

'Friend, since thou art the first that I have chanced on in this land, hail to thee, and with no ill-will mayest thou meet me! Nay, save this my substance and save me too, for to thee as to a god I make prayer, and to thy dear knees have I come. And herein tell me true, that I may surely know. What land, what people is this? what men dwell therein? Is it, perchance, some clear seen isle, or a shore of the rich mainland that lies and leans upon the deep?'

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, spake to him again: 'Thou art witless, stranger, or thou art come from afar, if indeed thou askest of this land; nay, it is not so very nameless but that many men know it, both all those who dwell toward the dawning and the sun, and they that abide over against the light toward the shadowy west. Verily it is rough and not fit for the driving of horses, yet is it not a very sorry isle, though narrow withal. For herein is corn past telling, and herein too wine is found, and the rain is on it evermore, and the fresh dew. And it is good for feeding goats and feeding kine; all manner of wood is here, and watering-places unfailing are herein. Wherefore, stranger, the name of Ithaca hath reached even unto Troy-land, which men say is far from this Achaean shore.'

So spake she, and the steadfast, goodly Odysseus was glad, and had joy in his own country, according to the word of Pallas Athene, daughter of Zeus, lord of the aegis. And he uttered his voice and spake unto her winged words; yet he did not speak the truth, but wrested the word into guile, for he had a gainful and a nimble wit within his breast:

'Of Ithaca have I heard tell, even in broad Crete, far over the seas; and now have I come hither myself with these my goods. And I left as much again to my children, when I turned outlaw for the slaying of the dear son of Idomeneus, Orsilochus, swift of foot, who in wide Crete was the swiftest of all men that live by bread. Now he would have despoiled me of all that booty of Troy, for the which I had endured pain of heart, in passing through the wars of men, and the grievous waves of the sea, for this cause that I would not do a favour to his father, and make me his squire in the land of the Trojans, but commanded other fellowship of mine own. So I smote him with a bronze-shod spear as he came home from the field, lying in ambush for him by the wayside, with one of my companions. And dark midnight held the heavens, and no man marked us, but privily I took his life away. Now after I had slain him with the sharp spear, straightway I went to a ship and besought the lordly Phoenicians, and gave them spoil to their hearts' desire. I charged them to take me on board, and land me at Pylos or at goodly Elis where the Epeans bear rule. Howbeit of a truth, the might of the wind drave them out of their course, sore against their will, nor did they wilfully play me false. Thence we were driven wandering, and came hither by night. And with much ado we rowed onward into harbour, nor took we any thought of supper, though we stood sore in need thereof, but even as we were we stept ashore and all lay down. Then over me there came sweet slumber in my weariness, but they took forth my goods from the hollow ship, and set them by me where I myself lay upon the sands. Then they went on board, and departed for the fair-lying land of Sidon; while as for me I was left stricken at heart.'

So spake he and the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, smiled, and caressed him with her hand; and straightway she changed to the semblance of a woman, fair and tall, and skilled in splendid handiwork. And uttering her voice she spake unto him winged words:

'Crafty must he be and knavish, who would outdo thee in all manner of guile, even if it were a god encountered thee. Hardy man, subtle of wit, of guile insatiate, so thou wast not even in thine own country to cease from thy sleights and knavish words, which thou lovest from the bottom of thine heart! But come, no more let us tell of these things, being both of us practised in deceits, for that thou art of all men far the first in counsel and in discourse, and I in the company of all the gods win renown for my wit and wile. Yet thou knewest not me, Pallas Athene, daughter of Zeus, who am always by thee and guard thee in all adventures. Yea, and I made thee to be beloved of all the Phaeacians. And now am I come hither to contrive a plot with thee and to hide away the goods, that by my counsel and design the noble Phaeacians gave thee on thy homeward way. And I would tell thee how great a measure of trouble thou art ordained to fulfil within thy well-builded house. But do thou harden thy heart, for so it must be, and tell none neither man nor woman of all the folk, that thou hast indeed returned from wandering, but in silence endure much sorrow, submitting thee to the despite of men.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered her saying: 'Hard is it, goddess, for a mortal man that meets thee to discern thee, howsoever wise he be; for thou takest upon thee every shape. But this I know well, that of old thou wast kindly to me, so long as we sons of the Achaeans made war in Troy. But so soon as we had sacked the steep city of Priam and had gone on board our ships, and the god had scattered the Achaeans, thereafter I have never beheld thee, daughter of Zeus, nor seen thee coming on board my ship, to ward off sorrow from me. But I wandered evermore with a stricken heart, till the gods delivered me from my evil case, even till the day when, within the fat land of the men of Phaeacia, thou didst comfort me with thy words, and thyself didst lead me to their city. And now I beseech thee in thy father's name to tell me: for I deem not that I am come to clear-seen Ithaca, but I roam over some other land, and methinks that thou speakest thus to mock me and beguile my mind. Tell me whether in very deed I am come to mine own dear country.'

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, answered him: 'Yea, such a thought as this is ever in thy breast. Wherefore I may in no wise leave thee in all thy grief, so wary art thou, so ready of wit and so prudent. Right gladly would any other man on his return from wandering have hasted to behold his children and his wife in his halls; but thou hast no will to learn or to hear aught, till thou hast furthermore made trial of thy wife, who sits as ever in her halls, and wearily for her the nights wane always and the days, in shedding of tears. But of this I never doubted, but ever knew it in my heart that thou wouldest come home with the loss of all thy company. Yet, I tell thee, I had no mind to be at strife with Poseidon, my own father's brother, who laid up wrath in his heart against thee, being angered at the blinding of his dear son. But come, and I will show thee the place of the dwelling of Ithaca, that thou mayst be assured. Lo, here is the haven of Phorcys, the ancient one of the sea, and here at the haven's head is the olive tree with spreading leaves, and hard by it is the pleasant cave and shadowy, sacred to the nymphs that are called the Naiads. Yonder, behold, is the roofed cavern, where thou offeredst many an acceptable sacrifice of hecatombs to the nymphs; and, lo, this hill is Neriton, all clothed in forest.'

Therewith the goddess scattered the mist, and the land appeared. Then the steadfast goodly Odysseus was glad rejoicing in his own land, and he kissed the earth, the grain-giver. And anon he prayed to the nymphs, and lifted up his hands, saying:

'Ye Naiad nymphs, daughters of Zeus, never did I think to look on you again, but now be ye greeted in my loving prayers: yea and gifts as aforetime I will give, if the daughter of Zeus, driver of the spoil, suffer me of her grace myself to live, and bring my dear son to manhood.'

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, spake to him again: 'Be of good courage, and let not thy heart be careful about these things. But come, let us straightway set thy goods in the secret place of the wondrous cave, that there they may abide for thee safe. And let us for ourselves advise us how all may be for the very best.'

Therewith the goddess plunged into the shadowy cave, searching out the chambers of the cavern. Meanwhile Odysseus brought up his treasure, the gold and the unyielding bronze and fair woven raiment, which the Phaeacians gave him. And these things he laid by with care, and Pallas Athene, daughter of Zeus, lord of the aegis, set a stone against the door of the cave. Then they twain sat down by the trunk of the sacred olive tree, and devised death for the froward wooers. And the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, spake first, saying:

'Son of Laertes, of the seed of Zeus, Odysseus of many devices, advise thee how thou mayest stretch forth thine hands upon the shameless wooers, who now these three years lord it through thy halls, as they woo thy godlike wife and proffer the gifts of wooing. And she, that is ever bewailing her for thy return, gives hope to all and makes promises to every man and sends them messages, but her mind is set on other things.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered her, saying:

'Lo now, in very truth I was like to have perished in my halls by the evil doom of Agamemnon, son of Atreus, hadst not thou, goddess, declared me each thing aright. Come then, weave some counsel whereby I may requite them; and thyself stand by me, and put great boldness of spirit within me, even as in the day when we loosed the shining coronal of Troy. If but thou wouldest stand by me with such eagerness, thou grey-eyed goddess, I would war even with three hundred men, with thee my lady and goddess, if thou of thy grace didst succour me the while.'

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, answered him: 'Yea, verily I will be near thee nor will I forget thee, whensoever we come to this toil: and methinks that certain of the wooers that devour thy livelihood shall bespatter the boundless earth with blood and brains. But come, I will make thee such-like that no man shall know thee. Thy fair skin I will wither on thy supple limbs, and make waste thy yellow hair from off thy head, and wrap thee in a foul garment, such that one would shudder to see a man therein. And I will dim thy two eyes, erewhile so fair, in such wise that thou mayest be unseemly in the sight of all the wooers and of thy wife and son, whom thou didst leave in thy halls. And do thou thyself first of all go unto the swineherd, who tends thy swine, and is loyal to thee as of old, and loves thy son and constant Penelope. Him shalt thou find sitting by the swine, as they are feeding near the rock of Corax and the spring Arethusa, and there they eat abundance of acorns and drink the black water, things that make in good case the rich flesh of swine. There do thou abide and sit by the swine, and find out all, till I have gone to Sparta, the land of fair women, to call Telemachus thy dear son, Odysseus, who hath betaken himself to spacious Lacedaemon, to the house of Menelaus to seek tidings of thee, whether haply thou art yet alive.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered her saying: 'Nay, wherefore then didst thou not tell him, seeing thou hast knowledge of all? Was it, perchance, that he too may wander in sorrow over the unharvested seas, and that others may consume his livelihood?'

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, answered him: 'Nay, let him not be heavy on thy heart. I myself was his guide, that by going thither he might win a good report. Lo, he knows no toil, but he sits in peace in the palace of the son of Atreus, and has boundless store about him. Truly the young men with their black ship they lie in wait, and are eager to slay him ere he come to his own country. But this, methinks, shall never be. Yea, sooner shall the earth close over certain of the wooers that devour thy livelihood.'

Therewith Athene touched him with her wand. His fair flesh she withered on his supple limbs, and made waste his yellow hair from off his head, and over all his limbs she cast the skin of an old man, and dimmed his two eyes, erewhile so fair. And she changed his raiment to a vile wrap and a doublet, torn garments and filthy, stained with foul smoke. And over all she clad him with the great bald hide of a swift stag, and she gave him a staff and a mean tattered scrip, and a cord therewith to hang it.

And after they twain had taken this counsel together, they parted; and she now went to goodly Lacedaemon to fetch the son of Odysseus.

BOOK XIV

Odysseus, in the form of a beggar, goes to Eumaeus, the master of his swine, where he is well used and tells a feigned story, and informs himself of the behaviour of the wooers.

But Odysseus fared forth from the haven by the rough track, up the wooded country and through the heights, where Athene had showed him that he should find the goodly swineherd, who cared most for his substance of all the thralls that goodly Odysseus had gotten.

Now he found him sitting at the front entry of the house, where his courtyard was builded high, in a place with wide prospect; a great court it was and a fair, with free range round it. This the swineherd had builded by himself for the swine of his lord who was afar, and his mistress and the old man Laertes knew not of it. With stones dragged thither had he builded it, and coped it with a fence of white thorn, and he had split an oak to the dark core, and without he had driven stakes the whole length thereof on either side, set thick and close; and within the courtyard he made twelve styes hard by one another to be beds for the swine, and in each stye fifty grovelling swine were penned, brood swine; but the boars slept without. Now these were far fewer in number, the godlike wooers minishing them at their feasts, for the swineherd ever sent in the best of all the fatted hogs. And their tale was three hundred and three-score. And by them always slept four dogs, as fierce as wild beasts, which the swineherd had bred, a master of men

Now he was fitting sandals to his feet, cutting a good brown oxhide, while the rest of his fellows, three in all, were abroad this way and that, with the droves of swine; while the fourth he had sent to the city to take a boar to the proud wooers, as needs he must, that they might sacrifice it and satisfy their soul with flesh.

And of a sudden the baying dogs saw Odysseus, and they ran at him yelping, but Odysseus in his wariness sat him down, and let the staff fall from his hand. There by his own homestead would he have suffered foul hurt, but the swineherd with quick feet hasted after them, and sped through the outer door, and let the skin fall from his hand. And the hounds he chid and drave them this way and that, with a shower of stones, and he spake unto his lord, saying:

'Old man, truly the dogs went nigh to be the death of thee all of a sudden, so shouldest thou have brought shame on me. Yea, and the gods have given me other pains and griefs enough. Here I sit, mourning and sorrowing for my godlike lord, and foster the fat swine for others to eat, while he in lack of food, it may be, wanders over some land and city of men of a strange speech, if haply he yet lives and beholds the sunlight. But come with me, let us to the inner steading, old man, that when thy heart is satisfied with bread and wine, thou too mayest tell thy tale and declare whence thou art, and how many woes thou hast endured.'

Therewith the goodly swineherd led him to the steading, and took him in and set him down, and strewed beneath him thick brushwood, and spread thereon the hide of a shaggy wild goat, wide and soft, which served himself for a mattress. And Odysseus rejoiced that he had given him such welcome, and spake and hailed him:

'May Zeus, O stranger, and all the other deathless gods grant thee thy dearest wish, since thou hast received me heartily!'

Then, O swineherd Eumaeus, didst thou answer him, saying: 'Guest of mine, it were an impious thing for me to slight a stranger, even if there came a meaner man than thou; for from Zeus are all strangers and beggars; and a little gift from such as we, is dear; for this is the way with thralls, who are ever in fear when young lords like ours bear rule over them. For surely the gods have stayed the returning of my master, who would have loved me diligently, and given me somewhat of my own, a house and a parcel of ground, and a comely wife, such as a kind lord gives to his man, who hath laboured much for him and the work of whose hands God hath likewise increased, even as he increaseth this work of mine whereat I abide. Therefore would my lord have rewarded me greatly, had he grown old at home. But he hath perished, as I would that all the stock of Helen had perished utterly, forasmuch as she hath caused the loosening of many a man's knees. For he too departed to Ilios of the goodly steeds, to get atonement for Agamemnon, that so he might war with the Trojans.'

Therewith he quickly bound up his doublet with his girdle, and went his way to the styes, where the tribes of the swine were penned. Thence he took and brought forth two, and sacrificed them both, and singed them and cut them small, and spitted them. And when he had roasted all, he bare and set it by Odysseus, all hot as it was upon the spits, and he sprinkled thereupon white barley-meal. Then in a bowl of ivy-wood he mixed the honey-sweet wine, and himself sat over against him and bade him fall to:

'Eat now, stranger, such fare as thralls have to hand, even flesh of sucking pigs; but the fatted hogs the wooers devour, for they know not the wrath of the gods nor any pity. Verily the blessed gods love not froward deeds, but they reverence justice and the righteous acts of men. Yet even foes and men unfriendly, that land on a strange coast, and Zeus grants them a prey, and they have laden their ships and depart for home; yea, even on their hearts falls strong fear of the wrath of the gods. But lo you, these men know somewhat,—for they have heard an utterance of a god—, even the tidings of thy father's evil end, seeing that they are not minded justly to woo, nor to go back to their own, but at ease they devour our wealth with insolence, and now there is no sparing. For every day and every night that comes from Zeus, they make sacrifice not of one victim only, nor of two, and wine they draw and waste it riotously. For surely his livelihood was great past telling, no lord in the dark mainland had so much, nor any in Ithaca itself; nay, not twenty men together have wealth so great, and I will tell thee the sum thereof. Twelve herds of kine upon the mainland, as many flocks of sheep, as many droves of swine, as many ranging herds of goats, that his own shepherds and strangers pasture. And ranging herds of goats, eleven in all, graze here by the extremity of the island with trusty men to watch them. And day by day each man of these ever drives one of the flock to the wooers, whichsoever seems the best of the fatted goats. But as for me I guard and keep these swine and I choose out for them, as well as I may, the best of the swine and send it hence.'

So spake he, but Odysseus ceased not to eat flesh and drink wine right eagerly and in silence, and the while was sowing the seeds of evil for the wooers. Now when he had well eaten and comforted his heart with food, then the herdsman filled him the bowl out of which he was wont himself to drink, and he gave it him brimming with wine, and he took it and was glad at heart, and uttering his voice spake to him winged words:

'My friend, who was it then that bought thee with his wealth, a man so exceeding rich and mighty as thou declarest? Thou saidest that he perished to get atonement for Agamemnon; tell me, if perchance I may know him, being such an one as thou sayest. For Zeus, methinks, and the other deathless gods know whether I have seen him and may bring tidings of him; for I have wandered far.'

Then the swineherd, a master of men, answered him: 'Old man, no wanderer who came hither and brought tidings of him could win the ear of his wife and his dear son; but lightly do vagrants lie when they need entertainment, and care not to tell truth. Whosoever comes straying to the land of Ithaca, goes to my mistress and speaks words of guile. And she receives him kindly and lovingly and inquires of all things, and the tears fall from her eyelids for weeping, as is meet for a woman when her lord hath died afar. And quickly enough wouldst thou too, old man, forge a tale, if any would but give thee a mantle and a doublet for raiment. But as for him, dogs and swift fowls are like already to have torn his skin from the bones, and his spirit hath left him. Or the fishes have eaten him in the deep, and there lie his bones swathed in sand-drift on the shore. Yonder then hath he perished, but for his friends nought is ordained but care, for all, but for me in chief. For never again shall I find a lord so gentle, how far soever I may go, not though again I attain unto the house of my father and my mother, where at first I was born, and they nourished me themselves and with their own hands they reared me. Nor henceforth it is not for these that I sorrow so much, though I long to behold them with mine eyes in mine own country, but desire takes hold of me for Odysseus who is afar. His name, stranger, even though he is not here, it shameth me to speak, for he loved me exceedingly, and cared for me at heart; nay, I call him "worshipful," albeit he is far hence.'

Then the steadfast goodly Odysseus spake to him again: 'My friend, forasmuch as thou utterly beliest me, and sayest that henceforth he will not come again, and thine heart is ever slow to believe, therefore will I tell thee not lightly but with an oath, that Odysseus shall return. And let me have the wages of good tidings as soon as ever he in his journeying shall come hither to his home. Then clothe me in a mantle and a doublet, goodly raiment. But ere that, albeit I am sore in need I will not take aught, for hateful to me even as the gates of hell, is that man, who under stress of poverty speaks words of guile. Now be Zeus my witness before any god, and the hospitable board and the hearth of noble Odysseus whereunto I am come, that all these things shall surely be accomplished even as I tell thee. In this same year Odysseus shall come hither; as the old moon wanes and the new is born shall he return to his home, and shall take vengeance on all who here dishonour his wife and noble son.'

Then didst thou make answer, swineherd Eumaeus: 'Old man, it is not I then, that shall ever pay thee these wages of good tidings, nor henceforth shall Odysseus ever come to his home. Nay drink at ease, and let us turn our thoughts to other matters, and bring not these to my remembrance, for surely my heart within me is sorrowful whenever any man puts me in mind of my true lord. But as for thine oath, we will let it be; but I pray that Odysseus may come according to my desire, and the desire of Penelope and of that old man Laertes and godlike Telemachus. But now I make a comfortless lament for the boy begotten of Odysseus, even for Telemachus. When the gods had reared him like a young sapling, and I thought that he would be no worse man among men than his dear father, glorious in form and face, some god or some man marred his good wits within him, and he went to fair Pylos after tidings of his sire. And now the lordly wooers lie in wait for him on his way home, that the race of godlike Arceisius may perish nameless out of Ithaca. Howbeit, no more of him now, whether he shall be taken or whether he shall escape, and Cronion stretch out his hand to shield him. But come, old man, do thou tell me of thine own troubles. And herein tell me true, that I may surely know. Who art thou of the sons of men, and whence? Where is thy city, where are they that begat thee? Say on what manner of ship didst thou come, and how did sailors bring thee to Ithaca, and who did they avow them to be? For in nowise do I deem that thou camest hither by land.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered him saying:

'Yea now, I will tell thee all most plainly. Might we have food and sweet wine enough to last for long, while we abide within thy hut to feast thereon in quiet, and others betake them to their work; then could I easily speak for a whole year, nor yet make a full end of telling all the troubles of my spirit, all the travail I have wrought by the will of the gods.

'I avow that I come by lineage from wide Crete, and am the son of a wealthy man. And many other sons he had born and bred in the halls, lawful-born of a wedded wife; but the mother that bare me was a concubine bought with a price. Yet Castor son of Hylax, of whose blood I avow me to be, gave me no less honour than his lawful sons. Now he at that time got worship even as a god from the Cretans in the land, for wealth and riches and sons renowned. Howbeit the fates of death bare him away to the house of Hades, and his gallant sons divided among them his living and cast lots for it. But to me they gave a very small gift and assigned me a dwelling, and I took unto me a wife, the daughter of men that had wide lands, by reason of my valour, for that I was no weakling nor a dastard; but now all my might has failed me, yet even so I deem that thou mightest guess from seeing the stubble what the grain has been, for of trouble I have plenty and to spare. But then verily did Ares and Athene give me boldness and courage to hurl through the press of men; and so often as I chose the best warriors for an ambush, sowing the seeds of evil for my foemen, no boding of death was in my lordly heart, but I would leap out the foremost and slay with the spear whoso of my foes was less fleet of foot than I. Such an one was I in war, but the labour of the field I never loved, nor home-keeping thrift, that breeds brave children, but galleys with their oars were dear to me, and wars and polished shafts and darts—baneful things whereat others use to shudder. But that, methinks, was dear to me which the god put in my heart, for divers men take delight in divers deeds. For ere ever the sons of the Achaeans had set foot on the land of Troy, I had nine times been a leader of men and of swift-faring ships against a strange people, and wealth fell ever to my hands. Of the booty I would choose out for me all that I craved, and much thereafter I won by lot. So my house got increase speedily, and thus I waxed dread and honourable among the Cretans. But when Zeus, of the far-borne voice, devised at the last that hateful path which loosened the knees of many a man in death, then the people called on me and on renowned Idomeneus to lead the ships to Ilios, nor was there any way whereby to refuse, for the people's voice bore hard upon us. There we sons of the Achaeans warred for nine whole years, and then in the tenth year we sacked the city of Priam, and departed homeward with our ships, and a god scattered the Achaeans. But Zeus, the counsellor, devised mischief against me, wretched man that I was! For one month only I abode and had joy in my children and my gentle wife, and all that I had; and thereafter my spirit bade me fit out ships in the best manner and sail to Egypt with my godlike company. Nine ships I fitted out and the host was gathered quickly; and then for six days my dear company feasted, and I gave them many victims that they might sacrifice to the gods and prepare a feast for themselves. But on the seventh day we set sail from wide Crete, with a North Wind fresh and fair, and lightly we ran as it were down stream, yea and no harm came to any ship of mine, but we sat safe and hale, while the wind and the pilots guided the barques. And on the fifth day we came to the fair-flowing Aegyptus, and in the river Aegyptus I stayed my curved ships. Then verily I bade my dear companions to abide there by the ships and to guard them, and I sent forth scouts to range the points of outlook. But my men gave place to wantonness, being the fools of their own force, and soon they fell to wasting the fields of the Egyptians, exceeding fair, and led away their wives and infant children and slew the men. And the cry came quickly to the city, and the people hearing the shout came forth at the breaking of the day, and all the plain was filled with footmen and horsemen and with the glitter of bronze. And Zeus, whose joy is in the thunder, sent an evil panic upon my company, and none durst stand and face the foe, for danger encompassed us on every side. There they slew many of us with the edge of the sword, and others they led up with them alive to work for them perforce. But as for me, Zeus himself put a thought into my heart; would to God that I had rather died, and met my fate there in Egypt, for sorrow was still mine host! Straightway I put off my well-wrought helmet from my head, and the shield from off my shoulders, and I cast away my spear from my hand, and I came over against the horses of the king, and clasped and kissed his knees, and he saved me and delivered me, and setting me on his own chariot took me weeping to his home. Truly many an one made at me with their ashen spears, eager to slay me, for verily they were sore angered. But the king kept them off and had respect unto the wrath of Zeus, the god of strangers, who chiefly hath displeasure at evil deeds. So for seven whole years I abode with their king, and gathered much substance among the Egyptians, for they all gave me gifts. But when the eighth year came in due season, there arrived a Phoenician practised in deceit, a greedy knave, who had already done much mischief among men. He wrought on me with his cunning, and took me with him until he came to Phoenicia, where was his house and where his treasures lay. There I abode with him for the space of a full year. But when now the months and days were fulfilled, as the year came round and the seasons returned, he set me aboard a seafaring ship for Libya on a false pretence, forsooth that I was to convey a cargo with him, but his purpose was to sell me in Libya, and get a great price. So I went with him on board, as needs I must, suspecting all. And the ship ran before a North Wind fresh and fair, through the mid sea over beyond Crete, and Zeus contrived the destruction of the crew. But when we left Crete, and no land showed in sight but sky and sea only, even then the son of Cronos stayed a dark cloud over the hollow ship, and the deep waxed dark beneath it. And in the same moment Zeus thundered and smote his bolt into the ship, and she reeled all over being stricken by the bolt of Zeus, and was filled with fire and brimstone, and all the crew fell overboard. And like sea-gulls they were borne hither and thither on the waves about the black ship, and the god cut off their return. But in this hour of my affliction Zeus himself put into my hands the huge mast of the dark-prowed ship, that even yet I might escape from harm. So I clung round the mast and was borne by the ruinous winds. For nine days was I borne, and on the tenth black night the great rolling wave brought me nigh to the land of the Thesprotians. There the king of the Thesprotians, the lord Pheidon, took me in freely, for his dear son lighted on me and raised me by the hand and led me to his house, foredone with toil and the keen air, till he came to his father's palace. And he clothed me in a mantle and a doublet for raiment.

'There I heard tidings of Odysseus, for the king told me that he had entertained him, and kindly entreated him on his way to his own country; and he showed me all the wealth that Odysseus had gathered, bronze and gold and well-wrought iron; yea it would suffice for his children after him even to the tenth generation, so great were the treasures he had stored in the chambers of the king. He had gone, he said, to Dodona to hear the counsel of Zeus, from the high leafy oak tree of the god, how he should return to the fat land of Ithaca after long absence, whether openly or by stealth. Moreover, he sware, in mine own presence, as he poured the drink offering in his house, that the ship was drawn down to the sea and his company were ready, who were to convey him to his own dear country. But me he first sent off, for it chanced that a ship of the Thesprotians was starting for Dulichium, a land rich in grain. Thither he bade them guide me with all diligence to the king Acastus. But an evil counsel concerning me found favour in their sight, that even yet I might reach the extremity of sorrow. When the seafaring ship had sailed a great way from the land, anon they sought how they might compass for me the day of slavery. They stript me of my garments, my mantle and a doublet, and changed my raiment to a vile wrap and doublet, tattered garments, even those thou seest now before thee; and in the evening they reached the fields of clear-seen Ithaca. There in the decked ship they bound me closely with a twisted rope, and themselves went ashore, and hasted to take supper by the sea-banks. Meanwhile the gods themselves lightly unclasped my bands, and muffling my head with the wrap I slid down the smooth ladder at the stern, and set my breast to the sea and rowed hard with both hands as I swam, and very soon I was out of the water and beyond their reach. Then I went up where there was a thicket, a wood in full leaf, and lay there crouching. And they went hither and thither making great moan; but when now it seemed to them little good to go further on their quest, they departed back again aboard their hollow ship. And the gods themselves hid me easily and brought me nigh to the homestead of a wise man; for still, methinks, I am ordained to live on.'

Then didst thou make answer to him, swineherd Eumaeus: 'Ah! wretched guest, verily thou hast stirred my heart with the tale of all these things, of thy sufferings and thy wanderings. Yet herein, methinks, thou speakest not aright, and never shalt thou persuade me with the tale about Odysseus; why should one in thy plight lie vainly? Well I know of mine own self, as touching my lord's return, that he was utterly hated by all the gods, in that they smote him not among the Trojans nor in the arms of his friends, when he had wound up the clew of war. So should the whole Achaean host have builded him a barrow; yea and for his son would he have won great glory in the after days; but now all ingloriously the spirits of the storm have snatched him away. But as for me I dwell apart by the swine and go not to the city, unless perchance wise Penelope summons me thither, when tidings of my master are brought I know not whence. Now all the people sit round and straitly question the news-bearer, both such as grieve for their lord that is long gone, and such as rejoice in devouring his living without atonement. But I have no care to ask or to inquire, since the day that an Aetolian cheated me with his story, one who had slain his man and wandered over wide lands and came to my steading, and I dealt lovingly with him. He said that he had seen my master among the Cretans at the house of Idomeneus, mending his ships which the storms had broken. And he said that he would come home either by the summer or the harvest-tide, bringing much wealth with the godlike men of his company. And thou too old man of many sorrows, seeing that some god hath brought thee to me, seek not my grace with lies, nor give me any such comfort; not for this will I have respect to thee or hold thee dear, but only for the fear of Zeus, the god of strangers, and for pity of thyself.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered him saying: 'Verily thy heart within thee is slow to believe, seeing that even with an oath I have not won thee, nor find credence with thee. But come now, let us make a covenant; and we will each one have for witnesses the gods above, who hold Olympus. If thy lord shall return to this house, put on me a mantle and doublet for raiment, and send me on my way to Dulichium, whither I had a desire to go. But if thy lord return not according to my word, set thy thralls upon me, and cast me down from a mighty rock, that another beggar in his turn may beware of deceiving.'

And the goodly swineherd answered him, saying: 'Yea stranger, even so should I get much honour and good luck among men both now and ever hereafter, if after bringing thee to my hut and giving thee a stranger's cheer, I should turn again and slay thee and take away thy dear life. With good heart thereafter would I pray to Zeus the son of Cronos! But now it is supper-time, and would that my fellows may speedily be at home, that we may make ready a dainty supper within the hut.'

Thus they spake one to the other. And lo, the swine and the swineherds drew nigh. And the swine they shut up to sleep in their lairs, and a mighty din arose as the swine were being stalled. Then the goodly swineherd called to his fellows, saying:

'Bring the best of the swine, that I may sacrifice it for a guest of mine from a far land: and we too will have good cheer therewith, for we have long suffered and toiled by reason of the white-tusked swine, while others devour the fruit of our labour without atonement.'

Therewithal he cleft logs with the pitiless axe, and the others brought in a well-fatted boar of five years old; and they set him by the hearth nor did the swineherd forget the deathless gods, for he was of an understanding heart. But for a beginning of sacrifice he cast bristles from the head of the white-tusked boar upon the fire, and prayed to all the gods that wise Odysseus might return to his own house. Then he stood erect, and smote the boar with a billet of oak which he had left in the cleaving, and the boar yielded up his life. Then they cut the throat and singed the carcase and quickly cut it up, and the swineherd took a first portion from all the limbs, and laid the raw flesh on the rich fat. And some pieces he cast into the fire after sprinkling them with bruised barley-meal, and they cut the rest up small, and pierced it, and spitted and roasted it carefully, and drew it all off from the spits and put the whole mess together on trenchers. Then the swineherd stood up to carve, for well he knew what was fair, and he cut up the whole and divided it into seven portions. One, when he had prayed, he set aside for the nymphs and for Hermes son of Maia, and the rest he distributed to each. And he gave Odysseus the portion of honour, the long back of the white-tusked boar, and the soul of his lord rejoiced at this renown, and Odysseus of many counsels hailed him saying:

'Eumaeus, oh that thou mayest so surely be dear to father Zeus, as thou art to me, seeing that thou honourest me with a good portion, such an one as I am!'

Then didst thou make answer, swineherd Eumaeus:

'Eat, luckless stranger, and make merry with such fare as is here. And one thing the god will give and another withhold, even as he will, for with him all things are possible.'

So he spake, and made burnt offering of the hallowed parts to the everlasting gods, and poured the dark wine for a drink offering, and set the cup in the hands of Odysseus, the waster of cities, and sat down by his own mess. And Mesaulius bare them wheaten bread, a thrall that the swineherd had gotten all alone, while his lord was away, without the knowledge of his mistress and the old Laertes: yea he had bought him of the Taphians with his own substance. So they stretched forth their hands upon the good cheer spread before them. Now after they had put from them the desire of meat and drink, Mesaulius cleared away the bread, and they, now that they had eaten enough of bread and flesh, were moved to go to rest.

Now it was so that night came on foul with a blind moon, and Zeus rained the whole night through, and still the great West Wind, the rainy wind, was blowing. Then Odysseus spake among them that he might make trial of the swineherd, and see whether he would take off his own mantle and give it to him or bid one of his company strip, since he cared for him so greatly:

'Listen now, Eumaeus, and all of you his companions, I will utter a prayer and then tell my tale; so bids me witless wine, which drives even the wisest to sing and to laugh softly, and rouses him to dance, yea and makes him to speak out a word which were better unspoken. Howbeit, now that I have broken into speech, I will not hide aught. Oh that I were young, and my might were steadfast, as in the day when we arrayed our ambush and led it beneath Troy town! And Odysseus, and Menelaus son of Atreus, were leaders and with them I was a third in command; for so they bade me. Now when we had come to the city and the steep wall, we lay about the citadel in the thick brushwood, crouching under our arms among the reeds and the marsh land, and behold, the night came on foul, with frost, as the North Wind went down, while the snow fell from above, and crusted like rime, bitter cold, and the ice set thick about our shields. Now the others all had mantles and doublets, and slept in peace with their shields buckled close about their shoulders; but I as I went forth had left my mantle behind with my men, in my folly, thinking that even so I should not be cold: so I came with my shield alone, and my shining doublet. But when it was now the third watch of the night and the stars had passed the zenith, in that hour I spake unto Odysseus who was nigh me, and thrust him with my elbow, and he listened straightway:

'"Son of Laertes, of the seed of Zeus, Odysseus of many devices, verily I shall cease from among living men, for this wintry cold is slaying me, seeing that I have no mantle. Some god beguiled me to wear a doublet only, and henceforth is no way of escape."

'So I spake, and he apprehended a thought in his heart, such an one as he was in counsel and in fight. So he whispered and spake to me, saying:

'"Be silent now, lest some other Achaeans hear thee." Therewith he raised his head upon his elbow, and spake, saying: "Listen, friends, a vision from a god came to me in my sleep. Lo, we have come very far from the ships; I would there were one to tell it to Agamemnon, son of Atreus, shepherd of the host, if perchance he may send us hither a greater company from the ships."

'So spake he, and Thoas, son of Andraemon, rose up quickly and cast off his purple mantle. And he started to run unto the ships, but I lay gladly in his garment, and the golden-throned Dawn showed her light. Oh! that I were young as then and my might steadfast! Then should some of the swineherds in the homestead give me a mantle, alike for love's sake and for pity of a good warrior. But now they scorn me for that sorry raiment is about my body.'

Then didst thou make answer, O swineherd Eumaeus: 'Old man, the tale that thou hast told in his praise is very good, and so far thou hast not misspoken aught, or uttered a word unprofitably. Wherefore for this night thou shalt lack neither raiment nor aught else that is the due of a hapless suppliant, when he has met them that can befriend him. But in the morning thou shalt go shuffling in thine own rags, for there are not many mantles here or changes of doublet; for each man hath but one coat. But when the dear son of Odysseus comes, he himself will give thee a mantle and doublet for raiment, and send thee whithersoever thy heart and spirit bid.'

With that he sprang up and set a bed for Odysseus near the fire, and thereon he cast skins of sheep and goats. There Odysseus laid him down and Eumaeus cast a great thick mantle over him, which he had ever by him for a change of covering, when any terrible storm should arise.

So there Odysseus slept, and the young men slept beside him. But the swineherd had no mind to lie there in a bed away from the boars. So he made him ready to go forth and Odysseus was glad, because he had a great care for his master's substance while he was afar. First he cast his sharp sword about his strong shoulders, then he clad him in a very thick mantle, to keep the wind away; and he caught up the fleece of a great and well-fed goat, and seized his sharp javelin, to defend him against dogs and men. Then he went to lay him down even where the white-tusked boars were sleeping, beneath the hollow of the rock, in a place of shelter from the North Wind.

BOOK XV

Pallas sends home Telemachus from Lacedaemon with the presents given him by Menelaus. Telemachus landed, goes first to Eumaeus.

Now Pallas Athene went to the wide land of Lacedaemon, to put the noble son of the great-hearted Odysseus in mind of his return, and to make him hasten his coming. And she found Telemachus, and the glorious son of Nestor, couched at the entry of the house of famous Menelaus. The son of Nestor truly was overcome with soft sleep, but sweet sleep gat not hold of Telemachus, but, through the night divine, careful thoughts for his father kept him wakeful. And grey-eyed Athene stood nigh him and spake to him, saying:

'Telemachus, it is no longer meet that thou shouldest wander far from thy home, leaving thy substance behind thee, and men in thy house so wanton, lest they divide and utterly devour all thy wealth, and thou shalt have gone on a vain journey. But come, rouse with all haste Menelaus, of the loud war-cry, to send thee on thy way, that thou mayest even yet find thy noble mother in her home. For even now her father and her brethren bid her wed Eurymachus, for he outdoes all the wooers in his presents, and hath been greatly increasing his gifts of wooing. So shall she take no treasure from thy house despite thy will. Thou knowest of what sort is the heart of a woman within her; all her desire is to increase the house of the man who takes her to wife, but of her former children and of her own dear lord she has no more memory once he is dead, and she asks concerning him no more. Go then, and thyself put all thy livelihood in the hands of whatsoever maid seems to thee the best, till the day when the gods shall show thee a glorious bride. Now another word will I tell thee, and do thou lay it up in thine heart. The noblest of the wooers lie in wait for thee of purpose, in the strait between Ithaca and rugged Samos, eager to slay thee before thou come to thine own country. But this, methinks, will never be; yea, sooner shall the earth close over certain of the wooers that devour thy livelihood. Nay, keep thy well-wrought ship far from those isles, and sail by night as well as day, and he of the immortals who hath thee in his keeping and protection will send thee a fair breeze in thy wake. But when thou hast touched the nearest shore of Ithaca, send thy ship and all thy company forward to the city, but for thy part seek first the swineherd who keeps thy swine, and is loyal to thee as of old. There do thou rest the night, and bid him go to the city to bear tidings of thy coming to the wise Penelope, how that she hath got thee safe, and thou art come up out of Pylos.'

Therewith she departed to high Olympus. But Telemachus woke the son of Nestor out of sweet sleep, touching him with his heel, and spake to him, saying:

'Awake, Peisistratus, son of Nestor, bring up thy horses of solid hoof, and yoke them beneath the car, that we may get forward on the road.'

Then Peisistratus, son of Nestor, answered him, saying: 'Telemachus, we may in no wise drive through the dark night, how eager soever to be gone; nay, soon it will be dawn. Tarry then, till the hero, the son of Atreus, spear-famed Menelaus, brings gifts, and sets them on the car, and bespeaks thee kindly, and sends thee on thy way. For of him a guest is mindful all the days of his life, even of the host that shows him loving-kindness.'

So spake he, and anon came the golden-throned Dawn. And Menelaus, of the loud war-cry, drew nigh to them, new risen from his bed, by fair-haired Helen. Now when the dear son of Odysseus marked him, he made haste and girt his shining doublet about him, and the hero cast a great mantle over his mighty shoulders, and went forth at the door, and Telemachus, dear son of divine Odysseus, came up and spake to Menelaus, saying:

'Menelaus, son of Atreus, fosterling of Zeus, leader of the people, even now do thou speed me hence, to mine own dear country; for even now my heart is fain to come home again.'

Then Menelaus, of the loud war-cry, answered him: 'Telemachus, as for thee, I will not hold thee a long time here, that art eager to return; nay, I think it shame even in another host, who loves overmuch or hates overmuch. Measure is best in all things. He does equal wrong who speeds a guest that would fain abide, and stays one who is in haste to be gone. Men should lovingly entreat the present guest and speed the parting. But abide till I bring fair gifts and set them on the car and thine own eyes behold them, and I bid the women to prepare the midday meal in the halls, out of the good store they have within. Honour and glory it is for us, and gain withal for thee, that ye should have eaten well ere ye go on your way, over vast and limitless lands. And if thou art minded to journey through Hellas and mid Argos, wait till I too shall go with thee, and yoke thee horses and lead thee to the towns of men, and none shall send us empty away, but will give us some one thing to take with us, either a tripod of goodly bronze or a cauldron, or two mules or a golden chalice.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'Menelaus, son of Atreus, fosterling of Zeus, leader of the people, rather would I return even now to mine own land, for I left none behind to watch over my goods when I departed. I would not that I myself should perish on the quest of my godlike father, nor that any good heir-loom should be lost from my halls.'

Now when Menelaus, of the loud war-cry, heard this saying, straightway he bade his wife and maids to prepare the midday meal in the halls, out of the good store they had by them. Then Eteoneus, son of Boethous, came nigh him, just risen from his bed, for he abode not far from him. Him Menelaus of the loud war-cry bade kindle the fire and roast of the flesh; and he hearkened and obeyed. Then the prince went down into the fragrant treasure chamber, not alone, for Helen went with him, and Megapenthes. Now, when they came to the place where the treasures were stored, then Atrides took a double cup, and bade his son Megapenthes to bear a mixing bowl of silver. And Helen stood by the coffers, wherein were her robes of curious needlework which she herself had wrought. Then Helen, the fair lady, lifted one and brought it out, the widest and most beautifully embroidered of all, and it shone like a star, and lay far beneath the rest.

Then they went forth through the house till they came to Telemachus; and Menelaus, of the fair hair, spake to him saying:

'Telemachus, may Zeus the thunderer, and the lord of Here, in very truth bring about thy return according to the desire of thy heart. And of the gifts, such as are treasures stored in my house, I will give thee the goodliest and greatest of price. I will give thee a mixing bowl beautifully wrought; it is all of silver and the lips thereof are finished with gold, the work of Hephaestus; and the hero Phaedimus the king of the Sidonians, gave it to me when his house sheltered me, on my coming thither. This cup I would give to thee.'

Therewith the hero Atrides set the double cup in his hands. And the strong Megapenthes bare the shining silver bowl and set it before him. And Helen came up, beautiful Helen, with the robe in her hands, and spake and hailed him:

'Lo! I too give thee this gift, dear child, a memorial of the hands of Helen, against the day of thy desire, even of thy bridal, for thy bride to wear it. But meanwhile let it lie by thy dear mother in her chamber. And may joy go with thee to thy well-builded house, and thine own country.'

With that she put it into his hands, and he took it and was glad. And the hero Peisistratus took the gifts and laid them in the chest of the car, and gazed on all and wondered. Then Menelaus of the fair hair led them to the house. Then they twain sat them down on chairs and high seats, and a handmaid bare water for the hands in a goodly golden ewer, and poured it forth over a silver basin to wash withal, and drew to their side a polished table. And a grave dame bare wheaten bread and set it by them, and laid on the board many dainties, giving freely of such things as she had by her. And the son of Boethous carved by the board and divided the messes, and the son of renowned Menelaus poured forth the wine. So they stretched forth their hands upon the good cheer set before them. Now when they had put from them the desire of meat and drink, then did Telemachus and the glorious son of Nestor yoke the horses and climb into the inlaid car. And they drave forth from the gateway and the echoing corridor. After these Menelaus, of the fair hair, the son of Atreus, went forth bearing in his right hand a golden cup of honey-hearted wine, that they might pour a drink-offering ere they departed. And he stood before the horses and spake his greeting:

'Farewell, knightly youths, and salute in my name Nestor, the shepherd of the people; for truly he was gentle to me as a father, while we sons of the Achaeans warred in the land of Troy.'

And wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'Yea verily, O fosterling of Zeus, we will tell him all on our coming even as thou sayest. Would God I were so sure to find Odysseus in his home when I return to Ithaca and to tell him how I have met with all manner of loving-kindness at thy hands ere my departure, and now take with me treasures many and goodly!'

And even as he spake a bird flew forth at his right hand, an eagle that bare in his claws a great white goose, a tame fowl from the yard, and men and women followed shouting. But the bird drew near them and flew off to the right, across the horses, and they that saw it were glad, and their hearts were all comforted within them. And Peisistratus, son of Nestor, first spake among them:

'Consider, Menelaus, fosterling of Zeus, leader of the people, whether god hath showed forth this sign for us twain, or for thee thyself.'

So spake he, and the warrior Menelaus pondered thereupon, how he should take heed to answer, and interpret it aright.

And long-robed Helen took the word and spake, saying: 'Hear me, and I will prophesy as the immortals put it into my heart, and as I deem it will be accomplished. Even as yonder eagle came down from the hill, the place of his birth and kin, and snatched away the goose that was fostered in the house, even so shall Odysseus return home after much trial and long wanderings and take vengeance; yea, or even now is he at home and sowing the seeds of evil for all the wooers.'

Then wise Telemachus answered her, saying: 'Now may Zeus ordain it so, Zeus the thunderer and the lord of Here. Then would I do thee worship, as to a god, even in my home afar.'

He spake and smote the horses with the lash, and they sped quickly towards the plain, in eager course through the city. So all day long they swayed the yoke they bore upon their necks. And the sun sank, and all the ways were darkened. And they came to Pherae, to the house of Diocles, son of Orsilochus, the child begotten of Alpheus. There they rested for the night, and by them he set the entertainment of strangers.

Now so soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, they yoked the horses and mounted the inlaid car. And forth they drave from the gateway and the echoing corridor. And he touched the horses with the whip to start them, and the pair flew onward nothing loth. And soon thereafter they reached the steep hold of Pylos. Then Telemachus spake unto the son of Nestor, saying:

'Son of Nestor, in what wise mightest thou make me a promise and fulfil my bidding? For we claim to be friends by reason of our father's friendship from of old. Moreover we are equals in age, and this journey shall turn to our greater love. Take me not hence past my ship, O fosterling of Zeus, but leave me there, lest that old man keep me in his house in my despite, out of his eager kindness, for I must go right quickly home.'

So spake he, and the son of Nestor communed with his own heart how he might make promise, and duly fulfil the same. So as he thought thereon, in this wise it seemed to him best. He turned back his horses toward the swift ship and the sea-banks, and took forth the fair gifts and set them in the hinder part of the ship, the raiment and the gold which Menelaus gave him. And he called to Telemachus and spake to him winged words:

'Now climb the ship with all haste, and bid all thy company do likewise, ere I reach home and bring the old man word. For well I know in my mind and heart that, being so wilful of heart, he will not let thee go, but he himself will come hither to bid thee to his house, and methinks that he will not go back without thee; for very wroth will he be despite thine excuse.'

Thus he spake, and drave the horses with the flowing manes back to the town of the Pylians, and came quickly to the halls. And Telemachus called to his companions and commanded them, saying:

'Set ye the gear in order, my friends, in the black ship, and let us climb aboard that we may make way upon our course.'

So spake he, and they gave good heed and hearkened. Then straightway they embarked and sat upon the benches.

Thus was he busy hereat and praying and making burnt-offering to Athene, by the stern of the ship, when there drew nigh him one from a far country, that had slain his man and was fleeing from out of Argos. He was a soothsayer, and by his lineage he came of Melampus,[1] who of old time abode in

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[1] Neleus, Poseidon's son, had a daughter, Pero, the fairest of women, and to none would he give her but to the man that would lift the kine of his mother, Tyro, and drive them out of Phylace, where Iphiclus held them. Now, all men failing, Bias Talaus' son alone offered to do as much, and persuaded his brother Melampus to achieve this adventure, who, though he knew by his skill in prophecy that he should be kept prisoner for a year, yet went to Othrys after the kine. There the watchmen and the shepherds took him in the theft, and gave him up to Iphiclus. There was he bound and put in duresse, with two servants to watch him, a man and a woman, the man gentle, but the woman ungentle and unkind. Now when the year was almost run out, Melampus heard certain wood-worms overhead talking among themselves, and telling how 'the roof-beam was now well nigh

Pylos, mother of flocks, a rich man and one that had an exceeding goodly house among the Pylians, but afterward he had come to the land of strangers, fleeing from his country and from Neleus, the great-hearted, the proudest of living men, who kept all his goods for a full year by force. All that time Melampus lay bound with hard bonds in the halls of Phylacus, suffering strong pains for the sake of the daughter of Neleus, and for the dread blindness of soul which the goddess, the Erinnys of the dolorous stroke, had laid on him. Howsoever he escaped his fate, and drave away the lowing kine from Phylace to Pylos, and avenged the foul deed upon godlike Neleus, and brought the maiden home to his own brother to wife. As for him, he went to a country of other men, to Argos, the pastureland of horses; for there truly it was ordained that he should dwell, bearing rule over many of the Argives. There he wedded a wife, and builded him a lofty house, and begat Antiphates and Mantius, two mighty sons. Now Antiphates begat Oïcles, the great-hearted, and Oïcles Amphiaraus, the rouser of the host, whom Zeus, lord of the aegis, and Apollo loved with all manner of love. Yet he reached not the threshold of old age, but died in Thebes by reason of a woman's gifts. And the sons born to him were Alcmaeon and Amphilochus. But Mantius begat Polypheides and Cleitus; but it came to pass

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eaten through.' Thereon he called them that waited on him, and bade them carry him out: and they took up his bed and walked forth, the woman at the foot, and the man at the head going out foremost. In that moment the beam fell on the woman and killed her; but the man told Phylacus, and Phylacus told Iphiclus what had come to pass, who thereupon, as knowing Melampus to be a soothsayer, offered to set him free, if he would expound the reason wherefore Iphiclus was childless. And this was confirmed by oath. So Melampus sacrificed to Zeus, and set out a portion for all the fowls of the air. And they all came, save one vulture only, and he questioned them all, and none knew of the cause; and so they inquired of the vulture, who expounded the matter, which was strange, but here I say no more of it. So thereafter Iphiclus begat Podarcé; but Melampus, who got the cattle for the bride-price of Pero, gave her to his brother Bias. The story is told in the Seventh Book of Pherecydes, a contemporary of Herodotus, who wrote a mythological history in ten books.

that the golden-throned Dawn snatched away Cleitus for his very beauty's sake, that he might dwell with the Immortals.

And Apollo made the high-souled Polypheides a seer, far the chief of human kind, Amphiaraus being now dead. He removed his dwelling to Hypheresia, being angered with his father, and here he abode and prophesied to all men.

This man's son it was, Theoclymenus by name, that now drew nigh and stood by Telemachus. And he found him pouring a drink-offering and praying by the swift black ship, and uttering his voice he spake to him winged words:

'Friend, since I find thee making burnt-offering in this place, I pray thee, by thine offerings and by the god, and thereafter by thine own head, and in the name of the men of thy company answer my question truly and hide it not. Who art thou of the sons of men and whence? Where is thy city, where are they that begat thee?'

And wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'Yea now, stranger, I will plainly tell thee all. Of Ithaca am I by lineage, and my father is Odysseus, if ever such an one there was, but now hath he perished by an evil fate. Wherefore I have taken my company and a black ship, and have gone forth to hear word of my father that has been long afar.'

Then godlike Theoclymenus spake to him again: 'Even so I too have fled from my country, for the manslaying of one of mine own kin. And many brethren and kinsmen of the slain are in Argos, the pastureland of horses, and rule mightily over the Achaeans. Wherefore now am I an exile to shun death and black fate at their hands, for it is my doom yet to wander among men. Now set me on board ship, since I supplicate thee in my flight, lest they slay me utterly; for methinks they follow hard after me.'

And wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'Surely I will not drive thee away from our good ship, if thou art fain to come. Follow thou with us then, and in Ithaca thou shalt be welcome to such things as we have.'

Therewith he took from him his spear of bronze, and laid it along the deck of the curved ship, and himself too climbed the seafaring ship. Then he sat him down in the stern and made Theoclymenus to sit beside him; and his company loosed the hawsers. Then Telemachus called unto his company, and bade them lay hands on the tackling, and speedily they hearkened to his call. So they raised the mast of pine tree, and set it in the hole of the cross plank and made it fast with forestays, and hauled up the white sails with twisted ropes of ox-hide. And grey-eyed Athene sent them a favouring breeze, rushing violently through the clear sky that the ship might speedily finish her course over the salt water of the sea. So they passed by Crouni and Chalcis, a land of fair streams.

And the sun set and all the ways were darkened. And the vessel drew nigh to Pheae, being sped before the breeze of Zeus, and then passed goodly Elis where the Epeans bear rule. From thence he drave on again to the Pointed Isles, pondering whether he should escape death or be cut off.

Now Odysseus and the goodly swineherd were supping in the hut, and the other men sat at meat with them. So when they had put from them the desire of meat and drink, Odysseus spake among them, to prove the swineherd, whether he would still entertain him diligently, and bid him abide there in the steading or send him forward to the city:

'Listen now, Eumaeus, and all the others of the company. In the morning I would fain be gone to the town to go a begging, that I be not ruinous to thyself and thy fellows. Now advise me well, and lend me a good guide by the way to lead me thither; and through the city will I wander alone as needs I must, if perchance one may give me a cup of water and a morsel of bread. Moreover I would go to the house of divine Odysseus and bear tidings to the wise Penelope, and consort with the wanton wooers, if haply they might grant me a meal out of the boundless store that they have by them. Lightly might I do good service among them, even all that they would. For lo! I will tell thee and do thou mark and listen. By the favour of Hermes, the messenger, who gives grace and glory to all men's work, no mortal may vie with me in the business of a serving-man, in piling well a fire, in cleaving dry faggots, and in carving and roasting flesh and in pouring of wine, those offices wherein meaner men serve their betters.'

Then didst thou speak to him in heaviness of heart, swineherd Eumaeus: 'Ah! wherefore, stranger, hath such a thought arisen in thine heart? Surely thou art set on perishing utterly there, if thou wouldest indeed go into the throng of the wooers, whose outrage and violence reacheth even to the iron heaven! Not such as thou are their servants; they that minister to them are young and gaily clad in mantles and in doublets, and their heads are anointed with oil and they are fair of face, and the polished boards are laden with bread and flesh and wine. Nay, abide here, for none is vexed by thy presence, neither I nor any of my fellows that are with me. But when the dear son of Odysseus comes, he himself will give thee a mantle and a doublet for raiment, and will send thee whithersoever thy heart and spirit bid thee go.'

Then the steadfast goodly Odysseus answered him: 'Oh, that thou mayst so surely be dear to father Zeus as thou art to me, in that thou didst make me to cease from wandering and dread woe! For there is no other thing more mischievous to men than roaming; yet for their cursed belly's need men endure sore distress, to whom come wandering and tribulation and pain. But behold now, since thou stayest me here, and biddest me wait his coming, tell me of the mother of divine Odysseus, and of the father whom at his departure he left behind him on the threshold of old age; are they, it may be, yet alive beneath the sunlight, or already dead and within the house of Hades?'

Then spake to him the swineherd, a master of men: 'Yea now, stranger, I will plainly tell thee all. Laertes yet lives, and prays evermore to Zeus that his life may waste from out his limbs within his halls. For he has wondrous sorrow for his son that is far away, and for the gentle lady his wise wife, whose death afflicted him in chief and brought him to old age before his day. Now she died of very grief for her son renowned, by an evil death, so may no man perish who dwells here and is a friend to me in word and deed! So long as she was on earth, though in much sorrow, I was glad to ask and enquire concerning her, for that she herself had reared me along with long-robed Ctimene, her noble daughter, the youngest of her children. With her I was reared, and she honoured me little less than her own. But when we both came to the time of our desire, to the flower of age, thereupon they sent her to Same, and got a great bride-price; but my lady clad me in a mantle and a doublet, raiment very fair, and gave me sandals for my feet and sent me forth to the field, and still she loved me with increasing love. But now at the last I lack all this; yet the blessed gods prosper the work of mine own hands, whereat I abide. Of this my substance I have eaten and drunken and given to reverend strangers. But from my lady I may hear nought pleasant, neither word nor deed, for evil hath fallen on my house, a plague of froward men: yet thralls have a great desire to speak before their mistress and find out all and eat and drink, and moreover to carry off somewhat with them to the field, such things as ever comfort the heart of a thrall.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered him saying: 'Ah, Eumaeus, how far then didst thou wander from thine own country and thy parents while as yet thou wast but a child! But come, declare me this and plainly tell it all. Was a wide-wayed town of men taken and sacked, wherein dwelt thy father and thy lady mother, or did unfriendly men find thee lonely, tending sheep or cattle, and shipped thee thence, and sold thee into the house of thy master here, who paid for thee a goodly price?'

Then spake to him the swineherd, a master of men: 'Stranger, since thou askest and questionest me hereof, give heed now in silence and make merry, and abide here drinking wine. Lo, the nights now are of length untold. Time is there to sleep, and time to listen and be glad; thou needest not turn to bed before the hour; even too much sleep is vexation of spirit. But for the rest, let him whose heart and mind bid him, go forth and slumber, and at the dawning of the day let him break his fast, and follow our master's swine. But let us twain drink and feast within the steading, and each in his neighbour's sorrows take delight, recalling them, for even the memory of griefs is a joy to a man who hath been sore tried and wandered far. Wherefore I will tell thee that whereof thou askest and dost question me.

'There is a certain isle called Syria, if haply thou hast heard tell of it, over above Ortygia, and there are the turning-places of the sun. It is not so very thickly peopled, but the land is good, rich in herds, rich in flocks, with plenty of corn and wine. Dearth never enters the land, and no hateful sickness falls on wretched mortals. But when the tribes of men grow old in that city, then comes Apollo of the silver bow, with Artemis, and slays them with the visitation of his gentle shafts. In that isle are two cities, and the whole land is divided between them, and my father was king over the twain, Ctesius son of Ormenus, a man like to the Immortals.

'Thither came the Phoenicians, mariners renowned, greedy merchant men, with countless gauds in a black ship. Now in my fathers' house was a Phoenician woman, tall and fair and skilled in bright handiwork; this woman the Phoenicians with their sleights beguiled. First as she was washing clothes, one of them lay with her in love by the hollow ship, for love beguiles the minds of womankind, even of the upright. Then he asked her who she was and whence she came, and straightway she showed him of the lofty home of her father, saying:

'"From out of Sidon I avow that I come, a land rich in bronze, and I am the daughter of Arybas, the deeply wealthy. But Taphians, who were sea-robbers, laid hands on me and snatched me away as I came in from the fields, and brought me hither and sold me into the house of my master, who paid for me a goodly price."

'Then the man who had lain with her privily, answered: "Say, wouldst thou now return home with us, that thou mayst look again on the lofty house of thy father and mother and on their faces? For truly they yet live, and have a name for wealth."

'Then the woman answered him and spake, saying: "Even this may well be, if ye sailors will pledge me an oath to bring me home in safety."

'So spake she, and they all swore thereto as she bade them. Now when they had sworn and done that oath, again the woman spake among them and answered, saying:

'"Hold your peace now, and let none of your fellows speak to me and greet me, if they meet me in the street, or even at the well, lest one go and tell it to the old man at home, and he suspect somewhat and bind me in hard bonds and devise death for all of you. But keep ye the matter in mind, and speed the purchase of your homeward freight. And when your ship is freighted with stores, let a message come quickly to me at the house; for I will likewise bring gold, all that comes under my hand. Yea and there is another thing that I would gladly give for my fare. I am nurse to the child of my lord in the halls, a most cunning little boy, that runs out and abroad with me. Him would I bring on board ship, and he should fetch you a great price, wheresoever ye take him for sale among men of strange speech."

'Therewith she went her way to the fair halls. But they abode among us a whole year, and got together much wealth in their hollow ship. And when their hollow ship was now laden to depart, they sent a messenger to tell the tidings to the woman. There came a man versed in craft to my father's house, with a golden chain strung here and there with amber beads. Now the maidens in the hall and my lady mother were handling the chain and gazing on it, and offering him their price; but he had signed silently to the woman, and therewithal gat him away to the hollow ship. Then she took me by the hand and led me forth from the house. And at the front entry of the house she found the cups and the tables of the guests that had been feasting, who were in waiting on my father. They had gone forth to the session and the place of parley of the people. And she straightway hid three goblets in her bosom, and bare them away, and I followed in my innocence. Then the sun sank and all the ways were darkened. And we went quickly and came to the good haven, where was the swift ship of the Phoenicians. So they climbed on board and took us up with them, and sailed over the wet ways, and Zeus sent us a favouring wind. For six days we sailed by day and night continually; but when Zeus, son of Cronos, added the seventh day thereto, then Artemis, the archer, smote the woman that she fell, as a sea-swallow falls, with a plunge into the hold. And they cast her forth to be the prey of seals and fishes, but I was left stricken at heart. And wind and water bare them and brought them to Ithaca, where Laertes bought me with his possessions. And thus it chanced that mine eyes beheld this land.'

Then Odysseus, of the seed of Zeus, answered him saying: 'Eumaeus, verily thou hast stirred my heart within me with the tale of all these things, of all the sorrow of heart thou hast endured. Yet surely Zeus hath given thee good as well as evil, since after all these adventures thou hast come to the house of a kindly man, who is careful to give thee meat and drink and right well thou livest. But I have come hither still wandering through the many towns of men.'

Thus they spake one with the other. Then they laid them down to sleep for no long while, but for a little space, for soon came the throned Dawn. But on the shore the company of Telemachus were striking their sails, and took down the mast quickly and rowed the ship on to anchorage. And they cast anchors and made fast the hawsers, and themselves too stept forth upon the strand of the sea, and made ready the midday meal, and mixed the dark wine. Now when they had put from them the desire of meat and drink, wise Telemachus first spake among them:

'Do ye now drive the black ship to the city, while I will go to the fields and to the herdsmen, and at even I will return to the city, when I have seen my lands. And in the morning I will set by you the wages of the voyage, a good feast of flesh and of sweet wine.'

Then godlike Theoclymenus answered him: 'And whither shall I go, dear child? To what man's house shall I betake me, of such as are lords in rocky Ithaca? Shall I get me straight to thy mother and to thy home?'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'In other case I would bid thee go even to our own house; for there is no lack of cheer for strangers, but now would it be worse for thyself, forasmuch as I shall be away nor would my mother see thee. For she comes not often in sight of the wooers in the house, but abides apart from them in her upper chamber, and weaves at her web. Yet there is one whom I will tell thee of, to whom thou mayst go, Eurymachus the glorious son of wise Polybus, whom now the men of Ithaca look on, even as if he were a god. For he is far the best man of them all, and is most eager to wed my mother and to have the sovereignty of Odysseus. Howbeit, Olympian Zeus, that dwells in the clear sky, knows hereof, whether or no he will fulfil for them the evil day before their marriage.'

Now even as he spake, a bird flew out on the right, a hawk, the swift messenger of Apollo. In his talons he held a dove and plucked her, and shed the feathers down to the earth, midway between the ship and Telemachus himself. Then Theoclymenus called him apart from his fellows, and clasped his hand and spake and hailed him:

'Telemachus, surely not without the god's will hath the bird flown out on the right, for I knew when I saw him that he was a bird of omen. There is no other house more kingly than yours in the land of Ithaca; nay, ye have ever the mastery.'

And wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'Ah, stranger, would that this word may be accomplished! Soon shouldest thou be aware of kindness and many a gift at my hands, so that whoso met with thee would call thee blessed.'

Then he spake to Piraeus, his trusty companion: 'Piraeus, son of Clytius, thou that at other seasons hearkenest to me above all my company who went with me to Pylos, even now, I pray, lead this stranger home with thee, and give heed to treat him lovingly and with worship in thy house till I come.'

Then Piraeus, spearsman renowned, answered him saying: 'Telemachus, though thou shouldest tarry here a long while, yet will I entertain this man, and he shall have no lack of stranger's cheer.'

Therewith he went on board, and bade his men themselves to mount and loose the hawsers. And quickly they embarked and sat upon the benches. And Telemachus bound his goodly sandals beneath his feet, and seized a mighty spear, shod with sharp bronze, from the deck of the ship and his men loosed the hawsers. So they thrust off and sailed to the city, as Telemachus bade them, the dear son of divine Odysseus. But swiftly his feet bore him on his forward way, till he came to the court, where were his swine out of number; and among them the good swineherd slept, a man loyal to his lords.

BOOK XVI

Telemachus sends Eumaeus to the city to tell his mother of his return. And how, in the meantime, Odysseus discovers himself to his son.

Now these twain, Odysseus and the goodly swineherd, within the hut had kindled a fire, and were making ready breakfast at the dawn, and had sent forth the herdsmen with the droves of swine. And round Telemachus the hounds, that love to bark, fawned and barked not, as he drew nigh. And goodly Odysseus took note of the fawning of the dogs, and the noise of footsteps fell upon his ears. Then straight he spake to Eumaeus winged words:

'Eumaeus, verily some friend or some other of thy familiars will soon be here, for the dogs do not bark but fawn around, and I catch the sound of footsteps.'

While the word was yet on his lips, his own dear son stood at the entering in of the gate. Then the swineherd sprang up in amazement, and out of his hands fell the vessels wherewith he was busied in mingling the dark wine. And he came over against his master and kissed his head and both his beautiful eyes and both his hands, and he let a great tear fall. And even as a loving father welcomes his son that has come in the tenth year from a far country, his only son and well-beloved, for whose sake he has had great sorrow and travail, even so did the goodly swineherd fall upon the neck of godlike Telemachus, and kiss him all over as one escaped from death, and he wept aloud and spake to him winged words:

'Thou art come, Telemachus, sweet light of mine eyes; methought I should see thee never again, after thou hadst gone in thy ship to Pylos. Nay now enter, dear child, that my heart may be glad at the sight of thee in mine house, who hast newly come from afar. For thou dost not often visit the field and the herdsmen, but abidest in the town; so it seems has thy good pleasure been, to look on the ruinous throng of the wooers.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'So be it, father, as thou sayest; and for thy sake am I come hither to see thee with mine eyes, and to hear from thy lips whether my mother yet abides in the halls or another has already wedded her, and the couch of Odysseus, perchance, lies in lack of bedding and deep in foul spider-webs.'

Then the swineherd, a master of men, answered him: 'Yea verily, she abides with patient spirit in thy halls, and wearily for her the nights wane always and the days, in shedding of tears.'

So he spake and took from him the spear of bronze. Then Telemachus passed within and crossed the threshold of stone. As he came near, his father Odysseus arose from his seat to give him place; but Telemachus, on his part, stayed him and spake saying:

'Be seated, stranger, and we will find a seat some other where in our steading, and there is a man here to set it for us.'

So he spake, and Odysseus went back and sat him down again. And the swineherd strewed for Telemachus green brushwood below, and a fleece thereupon, and there presently the dear son of Odysseus sat him down. Next the swineherd set by them platters of roast flesh, the fragments that were left from the meal of yesterday. And wheaten bread he briskly heaped up in baskets, and mixed the honey-sweet wine in a goblet of ivy wood, and himself sat down over against divine Odysseus. So they stretched forth their hands upon the good cheer set before them. Now when they had put from them the desire of meat and drink, Telemachus spake to the goodly swineherd, saying:

'Father, whence came this stranger to thee? How did sailors bring him to Ithaca? and who did they avow them to be? For in no wise, I deem, did he come hither by land.'

Then didst thou make answer, swineherd Eumaeus: 'Yea now, my son, I will plainly tell thee all. Of wide Crete he avows him to be by lineage, and he says that round many cities of mortals he has wandered at adventure; even so has some god spun for him the thread of fate. But now, as a runaway from a ship of the Thesprotians, has he come to my steading, and I will give him to thee for thy man; do with him as thou wilt; he avows him for thy suppliant.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'Eumaeus, verily a bitter word is this that thou speakest. How indeed shall I receive this guest in my house? Myself I am young, and trust not yet to my strength of hands to defend me against the man who is angered without a cause. And my mother has divisions of heart, whether to abide here with me and keep the house, respecting the bed of her lord and the voice of the people, or straightway to go with whomsoever of the Achaeans that woo her in the halls is the best man, and gives most bridal gifts. But behold, as for this guest of thine, now that he has come to thy house, I will clothe him in a mantle and a doublet, goodly raiment, and I will give him a two-edged sword, and shoes for his feet, and send him on his way, whithersoever his heart and his spirit bid him go. Or, if thou wilt, hold him here in the steading and take care of him, and raiment I will send hither, and all manner of food to eat, that he be not ruinous to thee and to thy fellows. But thither into the company of the wooers would I not suffer him to go, for they are exceeding full of infatuate insolence, lest they mock at him, and that would be a sore grief to me. And hard it is for one man, how valiant soever, to achieve aught among a multitude, for verily they are far the stronger.'

Then the steadfast goodly Odysseus answered him: 'My friend, since it is indeed my right to answer thee withal, of a truth my heart is rent as I hear your words, such infatuate deeds ye say the wooers devise in the halls, in despite of thee, a man so noble. Say, dost thou willingly submit thee to oppression, or do the people through the township hate thee, obedient to the voice of a god? Or hast thou cause to blame thy brethren, in whose battle a man puts trust, even if a great feud arise? Ah, would that I were as young as thou, and in this my mood, and that I were either the son of noble Odysseus or Odysseus' very self, straightway then might a stranger sever my head from off my neck, if I went not to the halls of Odysseus, son of Laertes, and made myself the bane of every man among them! But if they should overcome me by numbers, being but one man against so many, far rather would I die slain in mine own halls, than witness for ever these unseemly deeds, strangers shamefully entreated, and men haling the handmaidens in foul wise through the fair house, and wine drawn wastefully, and the wooers devouring food all recklessly to no end, over a purpose that may never be accomplished.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'Yea now, stranger, I will plainly tell thee all. There is no grudge and hatred borne me by the whole people, neither have I cause to blame my brethren, in whose battle a man puts trust, even if a great feud arise. For thus, as thou seest, Cronion has made us a house of but one heir. Arceisius got him one only son Laertes, and one only son Odysseus was begotten of his father, and Odysseus left me the only child of his getting in these halls, and had no joy of me; wherefore now are foemen innumerable in the house. For all the noblest that are princes in the islands, in Dulichium and Same and wooded Zacynthus, and as many as lord it in rocky Ithaca, all these woo my mother and waste my house. But as for her she neither refuseth the hated bridal, nor hath the heart to make an end; so they devour and minish my house; and ere long will they make havoc likewise of myself. Howbeit these things surely lie on the knees of the gods. Nay, father, but do thou go with haste and tell the constant Penelope that she hath got me safe and that I am come up out of Pylos. As for me, I will tarry here, and do thou return hither when thou hast told the tidings to her alone; but of the other Achaeans let no man learn it, for there be many that devise mischief against me.'

Then didst thou make answer, swineherd Eumaeus: 'I mark, I heed, all this thou speakest to one with understanding. But come, declare me this and tell it plainly; whether or no I shall go the same road with tidings to Laertes, that hapless man, who till lately, despite his great sorrow for Odysseus' sake, yet had oversight of the tillage, and did eat and drink with the thralls in his house, as often as his heart within him bade him. But now from the day that thou wentest in thy ship to Pylos, never to this hour, they say, hath he eaten and drunken as before, nor looked to the labours of the field, but with groaning and lamentation he sits sorrowing, and the flesh wastes away about his bones.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'All the more grievous it is! yet will we let him be, though we sorrow thereat. For if men might in any wise have all their will we should before ought else choose the day of my father's returning. But do thou when thou hast told the tidings come straight back, and go not wandering through the fields after Laertes. But speak to my mother that with all speed she send forth the house-dame her handmaid, secretly, for she might bear tidings to the old man.'

With that word he roused the swineherd, who took his sandals in his hands and bound them beneath his feet and departed for the city. Now Athene noted Eumaeus the swineherd pass from the steading, and she drew nigh in the semblance of a woman fair and tall, and skilled in splendid handiwork. And she stood in presence manifest to Odysseus over against the doorway of the hut; but it was so that Telemachus saw her not before him and marked her not; for the gods in no wise appear visibly to all. But Odysseus was ware of her and the dogs likewise, which barked not, but with a low whine shrank cowering to the far side of the steading. Then she nodded at him with bent brows, and goodly Odysseus perceived it, and came forth from the room, past the great wall of the yard, and stood before her, and Athene spake to him, saying:

'Son of Laertes, of the seed of Zeus, Odysseus of many devices, now is the hour to reveal thy word to thy son, and hide it not, that ye twain having framed death and doom for the wooers, may fare to the famous town. Nor will I, even I, be long away from you, being right eager for battle.'

Therewith Athene touched him with her golden wand. First she cast about his breast a fresh linen robe and a doublet, and she increased his bulk and bloom. Dark his colour grew again, and his cheeks filled out, and the black beard spread thick around his chin.

Now she, when she had so wrought, withdrew again, but Odysseus went into the hut, and his dear son marvelled at him and looked away for very fear lest it should be a god, and he uttered his voice and spake to him winged words:

'Even now, stranger, thou art other in my sight than that thou wert a moment since, and other garments thou hast, and the colour of thy skin is no longer the same. Surely thou art a god of those that keep the wide heaven. Nay then, be gracious, that we may offer to thee well-pleasing sacrifices and golden gifts, beautifully wrought; and spare us I pray thee.'

Then the steadfast goodly Odysseus answered him, saying: 'Behold, no god am I; why likenest thou me to the immortals? nay, thy father am I, for whose sake thou sufferest many pains and groanest sore, and submittest thee to the despite of men.'

At the word he kissed his son, and from his cheeks let a tear fall to earth: before, he had stayed the tears continually. But Telemachus (for as yet he believed not that it was his father) answered in turn and spake, saying:

'Thou art not Odysseus my father, but some god beguiles me, that I may groan for more exceeding sorrow. For it cannot be that a mortal man should contrive this by the aid of his own wit, unless a god were himself to visit him, and lightly of his own will to make him young or old. For truly, but a moment gone, thou wert old and foully clad, but now thou art like the gods who keep the wide heaven.'

Then Odysseus of many counsels answered him saying:

'Telemachus, it fits thee not to marvel overmuch that thy father is come home, or to be amazed. Nay for thou shalt find no other Odysseus come hither any more; but lo, I, all as I am, after sufferings and much wandering have come in the twentieth year to mine own country. Behold, this is the work of Athene, driver of the spoil, who makes me such manner of man as she will,—for with her it is possible,—now like a beggar, and now again like a young man, and one clad about in rich raiment. Easy it is for the gods who keep the wide heaven to glorify or to abase a mortal man.'

With this word then he sat down again; but Telemachus, flinging himself upon his noble father's neck, mourned and shed tears, and in both their hearts arose the desire of lamentation. And they wailed aloud, more ceaselessly than birds, sea-eagles or vultures of crooked claws, whose younglings the country folk have taken from the nest, ere yet they are fledged. Even so pitifully fell the tears beneath their brows. And now would the sunlight have gone down upon their sorrowing, had not Telemachus spoken to his father suddenly:

'And in what manner of ship, father dear, did sailors at length bring thee hither to Ithaca? and whom did they avow them to be? For in no wise, I deem, didst thou come hither by land.'

And the steadfast goodly Odysseus answered him: 'Yea now, my child, I will tell thee all the truth. The Phaeacians brought me hither, mariners renowned, who speed other men too upon their way, whosoever comes to them. Asleep in the swift ship they bore me over the seas and set me down in Ithaca, and gave me splendid gifts, bronze and gold in plenty and woven raiment. And these treasures are lying by the gods' grace in the caves. But now I am come hither by the promptings of Athene, that we may take counsel for the slaughter of the foemen. But come, tell me all the tale of the wooers and their number, that I may know how many and what men they be, and that so I may commune with my good heart and advise me, whether we twain shall be able alone to make head against them without aid, or whether we should even seek succour of others.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'Verily, father, I have ever heard of thy great fame, for a warrior hardy of thy hands, and sage in counsel. But this is a hard saying of thine: awe comes over me; for it may not be that two men should do battle with many men and stalwart. For of the wooers there are not barely ten nor twice ten only, but many a decad more: and straight shalt thou learn the tale of them ere we part. From Dulichium there be two and fifty chosen lords, and six serving men go with them; and out of Same four and twenty men; and from Zacynthus there are twenty lords of the Achaeans; and from Ithaca itself full twelve men of the best, and with them Medon the henchman, and the divine minstrel, and two squires skilled in carving viands. If we shall encounter all these within the halls, see thou to it, lest bitter and baneful for us be the vengeance thou takest on their violence at thy coming. But do thou, if thou canst think of some champion, advise thee of any that may help us with all his heart.'

Then the steadfast goodly Odysseus answered him, saying: 'Yea now, I will tell thee, and do thou mark and listen to me, and consider whether Athene with Father Zeus will suffice for us twain, or whether I shall cast about for some other champion.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'Verily the best of champions are these two thou namest, though high in the clouds is their seat, and they rule among all men and among the deathless gods.'

Then the steadfast goodly Odysseus answered him: 'Verily these twain will not keep aloof from the strong tumult of war, when between the wooers and us in my halls is held the trial of the might of Ares. But as now, do thou go homeward at the breaking of the day, and consort with the proud wooers. As for me, the swineherd will lead me to the town later in the day, in the likeness of a beggar, a wretched man and an old. And if they shall evil entreat me in the house, let thy heart harden itself to endure while I am shamefully handled, yea even if they drag me by the feet through the house to the doors, or cast at me and smite me: still do thou bear the sight. Howbeit thou shalt surely bid them cease from their folly, exhorting them with smooth word; yet no whit will they hearken, nay for the day of their doom is at hand. Yet another thing will I tell thee, and do thou ponder it in thy heart. When Athene, of deep counsel, shall put it into my heart, I will nod to thee with my head and do thou note it, and carry away all thy weapons of war that lie in the halls, and lay them down every one in the secret place of the lofty chamber. And when the wooers miss them and ask thee concerning them, thou shalt beguile them with soft words, saying:

'"Out of the smoke have I laid them by, since they are no longer like those that Odysseus left behind him of old when he went to Troy, but they are wholly marred: so mightily hath passed upon them the vapour of fire. Moreover Cronion hath put into my heart this other and greater care, that perchance, when ye are heated with wine, ye set a quarrel between you and wound one the other and thereby shame the feast and the wooing; for iron of itself draws a man thereto." But for us twain alone leave two swords and two spears and two shields of oxhide to grasp, that we may rush upon the arms and seize them; and then shall Pallas Athene and Zeus the counsellor enchant the wooers to their ruin. Yet another thing will I tell thee, and do thou ponder it in thy heart. If in very truth thou art my son and of our blood, then let no man hear that Odysseus is come home; neither let Laertes know it, nor the swineherd nor any of the household nor Penelope herself, but let me and thee alone discover the intent of the women. Yea, and we would moreover make trial of certain of the men among the thralls and learn who of them chances to honour us and to fear us heartily, and who regards us not at all and holds even thee in no esteem, so noble a man as thou art.'

Then his renowned son answered him, and said: 'O my father, of a truth thou shalt learn, methinks, even hereafter what spirit I am of, for no whit doth folly possess me. But I deem not that this device of thine will be gainful to us twain, so I bid thee to give heed. For thou shalt be long time on thy road to little purpose, making trial of each man, while thou visitest the farm lands; but at ease in thy halls the wooers devour thy goods with insolence, and now there is no sparing. Howbeit I would have thee take knowledge of the women, who they be that dishonour thee, and who are guiltless. But of the men I would not that we should make trial in the steadings, but that we should see to this task afterwards, if indeed thou knowest some sign from Zeus, lord of the aegis.'

Thus they spake one to the other. And now the well-builded ship was being brought to land at Ithaca, the ship that bare Telemachus from Pylos with all his company. When they were now come within the deep harbour, the men drew up the black ship on the shore, while squires, haughty of heart, bare away their weapons, and straightway carried the glorious gifts to the house of Clytius. Anon they sent forward a herald to the house of Odysseus to bear the tidings to prudent Penelope, namely, how Telemachus was in the field, and had bidden the ship sail to the city, lest the noble queen should be afraid, and let the round tears fall. So these two met, the herald and the goodly swineherd, come on the same errand to tell all to the lady. Now when they were got to the house of the divine king, the herald spake out among all the handmaids saying: 'Verily, O queen, thy son hath come out of Pylos.'

But the swineherd went up to Penelope, and told her all that her dear son had bidden him say. So, when he had declared all that had been enjoined him, he went on his way to the swine and left the enclosure and the hall.

Now the wooers were troubled and downcast in spirit, and forth they went from the hall past the great wall of the court, and there in front of the gates they sat them down. And Eurymachus son of Polybus first spake among them saying:

'Verily, friends, a proud deed hath Telemachus accomplished with a high hand, even this journey, and we said that he should never bring it to pass. But come, launch we a black ship, the best there is, and let us get together oarsmen of the sea, who shall straightway bear word to our friends to return home with speed.'

The word was yet on his lips, when Amphinomus turned in his place and saw the ship within the deep harbour, and the men lowering the sails and with the oars in their hands. Then sweetly he laughed out and spake among his fellows:

'Nay, let us now send no message any more, for lo, they are come home. Either some god has told them all or they themselves have seen the ship of Telemachus go by, and have not been able to catch her.'

Thus he spake, and they arose and went to the seabanks. Swiftly the men drew up the black ship on the shore, and squires, haughty of heart, bare away their weapons. And the wooers all together went to the assembly-place, and suffered none other to sit with them, either of the young men or of the elders. Then Antinous spake among them, the son of Eupeithes:

'Lo now, how the gods have delivered this man from his evil case! All day long did scouts sit along the windy headlands, ever in quick succession, and at the going down of the sun we never rested for a night upon the shore, but sailing with our swift ship on the high seas we awaited the bright Dawn, as we lay in wait for Telemachus, that we might take and slay the man himself; but meanwhile some god has brought him home. But even here let us devise an evil end for him, even for Telemachus, and let him not escape out of our hands, for methinks that while he lives we shall never achieve this task of ours. For he himself has understanding in counsel and wisdom, and the people no longer show us favour in all things.

Nay come, before he assembles all the Achaeans to the gathering; for methinks that he will in nowise be slack, but will be exceeding wroth, and will stand up and speak out among them all, and tell how we plotted against him sheer destruction but did not overtake him. Then will they not approve us, when they hear these evil deeds. Beware then lest they do us a harm, and drive us forth from our country, and we come to the land of strangers. Nay, but let us be beforehand and take him in the field far from the city, or by the way; and let us ourselves keep his livelihood and his possessions, making fair division among us, but the house we would give to his mother to keep and to whomsoever marries her. But if this saying likes you not, but ye chose rather that he should live and keep the heritage of his father, no longer then let us gather here and eat all his store of pleasant substance, but let each one from his own hall woo her with his bridal gifts and seek to win her; so should she wed the man that gives the most and comes as the chosen of fate.'

So he spake, and they all held their peace. Then Amphinomus made harangue and spake out among them; he was the famous son of Nisus the prince, the son of Aretias, and he led the wooers that came from out Dulichium, a land rich in wheat and in grass, and more than all the rest his words were pleasing to Penelope, for he was of an understanding mind. And now of his good will he made harangue, and spake among them:

'Friends, I for one would not choose to kill Telemachus; it is a fearful thing to slay one of the stock of kings! Nay, first let us seek to the counsel of the gods, and if the oracles of great Zeus approve, myself I will slay him and bid all the rest to aid. But if the gods are disposed to avert it, I bid you to refrain.'

So spake Amphinomus, and his saying pleased them well. Then straightway they arose and went to the house of Odysseus, and entering in sat down on the polished seats.

Then the wise Penelope had a new thought, namely, to show herself to the wooers, so despiteful in their insolence; for she had heard of the death of her son that was to be in the halls, seeing that Medon the henchman had told her of it, who heard their counsels. So she went on her way to the hall, with the women her handmaids. Now when that fair lady had come unto the wooers, she stood by the doorpost of the well-builded roof, holding up her glistening tire before her face, and rebuked Antinous, and spake and hailed him:

'Antinous, full of all insolence, deviser of mischief! and yet they say that in the land of Ithaca thou art chiefest among thy peers in counsel and in speech. Nay, no such man dost thou show thyself. Fool! why indeed dost thou contrive death and doom for Telemachus, and hast no regard unto suppliants who have Zeus to witness? Nay but it is an impious thing to contrive evil one against another. What! knowest thou not of the day when thy father fled to this house in fear of the people, for verily they were exceeding wroth against him, because he had followed with Taphian sea robbers and harried the Thesprotians, who were at peace with us? So they wished to destroy thy father and wrest from him his dear life, and utterly to devour all his great and abundant livelihood; but Odysseus stayed and withheld them, for all their desire. His house thou now consumest without atonement, and his wife thou wooest, and wouldst slay his son, and dost greatly grieve me. But I bid thee cease, and command the others to do likewise.'

Then Eurymachus, son of Polybus, answered her saying: 'Daughter of Icarius, wise Penelope, take courage, and let not thy heart be careful for these things. The man is not, nor shall be, nor ever shall be born, that shall stretch forth his hands against Telemachus, thy son, while I live and am on earth and see the light. For thus will I declare to thee, and it shall surely come to pass. Right quickly shall the black blood of such an one flow about my spear; for Odysseus, waster of cities, of a truth did many a time set me too upon his knees, and gave me roasted flesh into my hand, and held the red wine to my lips. Wherefore Telemachus is far the dearest of all men to me, and I bid him have no fear of death, not from the wooers' hands; but from the gods none may avoid it.'

Thus he spake comforting her, but was himself the while framing death for her son.

Now she ascended to her shining upper chamber, and then was bewailing Odysseus, her dear lord, till grey-eyed Athene cast sweet sleep upon her eyelids.

And in the evening the goodly swineherd came back to Odysseus and his son, and they went about to make ready the supper, when they had sacrificed a swine of a year old. Then Athene drew near Odysseus, son of Laertes, and smote him with her wand, and made him into an old man again. In sorry raiment she clad him about his body, lest the swineherd should look on him and know him, and depart to tell the constant Penelope, and not keep the matter in his heart.

Then Telemachus spake first to the swineherd, saying: 'Thou hast come, goodly Eumaeus. What news is there in the town? Are the lordly wooers now come home from their ambush, or do they still watch for me yonder, to take me on my way home?'

Then didst thou make answer, swineherd Eumaeus: 'I had no mind to go about the city asking and inquiring hereof; my heart bade me get me home again, as quick as might be, when once I had told the tidings. And the swift messenger from thy company joined himself unto me, the henchman, who was the first to tell the news to thy mother. Yet this, too, I know, if thou wouldest hear; for I beheld it with mine eyes. Already had I come in my faring above the city, where is the hill Hermaean, when I marked a swift ship entering our haven, and many men there were in her, and she was laden with shields and two-headed spears, and methought they were the wooers, but I know not at all.'

So spake he, and the mighty prince Telemachus smiled, and glanced at his father, while he shunned the eye of the swineherd.

Now when they had ceased from the work and got supper ready, they fell to feasting, and their hearts lacked not ought of the equal banquet. But when they had put from them the desire of meat and drink, they bethought them of rest, and took the boon of sleep.

BOOK XVII

Telemachus relates to his mother what he had heard at Pylos and Sparta.

So soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, then Telemachus, the dear son of divine Odysseus, bound beneath his feet his goodly sandals, and took up his mighty spear that fitted his grasp, to make for the city; and he spake to his swineherd, saying:

'Verily, father, I am bound for the city, that my mother may see me, for methinks that she will not cease from grievous wailing and tearful lament, until she beholds my very face. But this command I give thee: Lead this stranger, the hapless one, to the city, that there he may beg his meat, and whoso chooses will give him a morsel of bread and a cup of water. As for myself, I can in no wise suffer every guest who comes to me, so afflicted am I in spirit. But if the stranger be sore angered hereat, the more grievous will it be for himself; howbeit I for one love to speak the truth.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered him saying: 'I too, my friend, have no great desire to be left behind here. It is better that a beggar should beg his meat in the town than in the fields, and whoso chooses will give it me. For I am not now of an age to abide at the steading, and to obey in all things the word of the master. Nay go, and this man that thou biddest will lead me, so soon as I shall be warmed with the fire, and the sun waxes hot. For woefully poor are these garments of mine, and I fear lest the hoar frost of the dawn overcome me; moreover ye say the city is far away.'

So he spake, and Telemachus passed out through the steading, stepping forth at a quick pace, and was sowing the seeds of evil for the wooers. Now when he was come to the fair-lying house, he set his spear against the tall pillar and leaned it there, and himself went in and crossed the threshold of stone.

And the nurse Eurycleia saw him far before the rest, as she was strewing skin coverlets upon the carven chairs, and straightway she drew near him, weeping, and all the other maidens of Odysseus, of the hardy heart, were gathered about him, and kissed him lovingly on the head and shoulders. Now wise Penelope came forth from her chamber, like Artemis or golden Aphrodite, and cast her arms about her dear son, and fell a weeping, and kissed his face and both his beautiful eyes, and wept aloud, and spake to him winged words:

'Thou art come, Telemachus, sweet light of mine eyes; methought I should see thee never again, after thou hadst gone in thy ship to Pylos, secretly and without my will, to seek tidings of thy dear father. Come now, tell me, what sight thou didst get of him?'

And wise Telemachus answered her, saying: 'Mother mine, wake not wailing in my soul, nor stir the heart within the breast of me, that have but now fled from utter death. Nay, but wash thee in water, and take to thee fresh raiment, and go aloft to thine upper chamber with the women thy handmaids, and vow to all the gods an acceptable sacrifice of hecatombs, if haply Zeus may grant that deeds of requital be made. But I will go to the assembly-place to bid a stranger to our house, one that accompanied me as I came hither from Pylos. I sent him forward with my godlike company, and commanded Piraeus to lead him home, and to take heed to treat him lovingly and with worship till I should come.'

Thus he spake, and his word unwinged abode with her. And she washed her in water, and took to her fresh raiment, and vowed to all the gods an acceptable sacrifice of hecatombs, if haply Zeus might grant that deeds of requital should be made.

Now Telemachus went out through the hall with the spear in his hand: and two swift hounds bare him company. And Athene shed on him a wondrous grace, and all the people marvelled at him as he came. And the lordly wooers gathered about him with fair words on their lips, but brooding evil in the deep of their heart. Then he avoided the great press of the wooers, but where Mentor sat, and Antiphus, and Halitherses, who were friends of his house from of old, there he went and sat down; and they asked him of all his adventures. Then Piraeus, the famed spearsman, drew nigh, leading the stranger to the assembly-place by the way of the town; and Telemachus kept not aloof from him long, but went up to him.

Then Piraeus first spake to him, saying: 'Bestir the women straightway to go to my house, that I may send thee the gifts that Menelaus gave thee.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'Piraeus we know not how these matters will fall out. If the lordly wooers shall slay me by guile in the halls, and divide among them the heritage of my father, then I should wish thee to keep and enjoy the gifts thyself, rather than any of these. But if I shall sow the seeds of death and fate for the wooers, then gladly bring me to the house the gifts that I will gladly take.'

Therewith he led the travel-worn stranger to the house. Now when they came to the fair-lying palace, they laid aside their mantles on the chairs and high seats, and went to the polished baths, and bathed them. So when the maidens had bathed them and anointed them with olive oil, and cast about them thick mantles and doublets, they came forth from the baths, and sat upon the seats. Then the handmaid bare water for the hands in a goodly golden ewer, and poured it forth over a silver basin to wash withal, and drew to their side a polished table. And the grave dame bare wheaten bread, and set it by them, and laid on the board many dainties, giving freely of such things as she had by her. And the mother of Telemachus sat over against him by the doorpost of the hall, leaning against a chair, and spinning the slender threads from the yarn. And they stretched forth their hands upon the good cheer set before them. Now when they had put from them the desire of meat and drink, the wise Penelope first spake among them:

'Telemachus, verily I will go up to my upper chamber, and lay me in my bed, the place of my groanings, that is ever watered by my tears, since the day that Odysseus departed with the sons of Atreus for Ilios. Yet thou hadst no care to tell me clearly, before the lordly wooers came to this house, concerning the returning of thy father, if haply thou hast heard thereof.'

And wise Telemachus answered her, saying: 'Yea now, mother, I will tell thee all the truth. We went to Pylos and to

Nestor, the shepherd of the people, and he received me in his lofty house, and was diligent to entreat me lovingly, as a father might his son that had but newly come from strange lands after many years; even so diligently he cared for me with his renowned sons. Yet he said that he had heard no word from any man on earth concerning Odysseus, of the hardy heart, whether alive or dead. But he sent me forward on my way with horses and a chariot, well compact, to Menelaus, son of Atreus, spearman renowned. There I saw Argive Helen, for whose sake the Argives and Trojans bore much travail by the gods' designs. Then straightway Menelaus, of the loud war-cry, asked me on what quest I had come to goodly Lacedaemon. And I told him all the truth. Then he made answer, and spake, saying:

' "Out upon them, for truly in the bed of a brave-hearted man were they minded to lie, very cravens as they are! Even as when a hind hath couched her newborn fawns unweaned in a strong lion's lair, and searcheth out the mountain-knees and grassy hollows, seeking pasture; and afterward the lion cometh back to his bed, and sendeth forth unsightly death upon that pair, even so shall Odysseus send forth unsightly death upon the wooers. Would to our father Zeus, and Athene, and Apollo, would that in such might as when of old in stablished Lesbos he rose up and wrestled a match with Philomeleides, and threw him mightily, and all the Achaeans rejoiced; would that in such strength Odysseus might consort with the wooers; then should they all have swift fate and bitter wedlock! But for that whereof thou askest and entreatest me, be sure I will not swerve from the truth in aught that I say, nor deceive thee; but of all that the ancient one of the sea, whose speech is sooth, declared to me, not a word will I hide or keep from thee. He said that he saw Odysseus in an island, suffering strong pains in the halls of the nymph Calypso, who holds him there perforce; so that he may not come to his own country, for he has by him no ships with oars, and no companions to send him on his way over the broad back of the sea." So spake Menelaus, son of Atreus, spearsman renowned. Then having fulfilled all, I set out for home, and the deathless gods gave me a fair wind, and brought me swiftly to mine own dear country.'

So he spake, and stirred her heart within her breast. And next the godlike Theoclymenus spake among them:

'O wife revered of Odysseus, son of Laertes, verily he hath no clear knowledge; but my word do thou mark, for I will prophesy to thee most truly and hide nought. Now Zeus be witness before any god, and this hospitable board and this hearth of noble Odysseus, whereunto I am come, that Odysseus is even now of a surety in his own country, resting or faring, learning of these evil deeds, and sowing the seeds of evil for all the wooers. So clear was the omen of the bird that I saw as I sat on the decked ship, and I proclaimed it to Telemachus.'

Then wise Penelope answered him, saying: 'Ah, stranger, would that this thy word may be accomplished! Soon shouldest thou be aware of kindness and of many a gift at my hands, so that whoso met with thee would call thee blessed.'

Thus they spake one to the other. But the wooers meantime were before the palace of Odysseus, taking their pleasure in casting of weights and of spears on a levelled place, as heretofore, in their insolence. But when it was now the hour for supper, and the sheep came home from the fields all around, and the men led them whose custom it was, then Medon, who of all the henchmen was most to their mind, and was ever with them at the feast, spake to them, saying:

'Noble youths, now that ye have had sport to your hearts' content, get you into the house, that we may make ready a feast; for truly it is no bad thing to take meat in season.'

Even so he spake, and they rose up and departed, and were obedient to his word. Now when they were come into the fair-lying house, they laid aside their mantles on the chairs and high seats, and they sacrificed great sheep and stout goats, yea, and the fatlings of the boars and an heifer of the herd, and got ready the feast.

Now all this while Odysseus and the goodly swineherd were bestirring them to go from the field to the city; and the swineherd, a master of men, spake first saying:

'Well, my friend, forasmuch as I see thou art eager to be going to the city to-day, even as my master gave command: —though myself I would well that thou shouldest be left here to keep the steading, but I hold him in reverence and fear, lest he chide me afterwards, and grievous are the rebukes of masters—come then, let us go on our way, for lo, the day is far spent, and soon wilt thou find it colder toward evening.'

Then Odysseus of many counsels answered him saying: 'I mark, I heed: all this thou speakest to one with understanding. But let us be going, and be thou my guide withal to the end. And if thou hast anywhere a staff ready cut, give it me to lean upon, for truly ye said the way was treacherous.'

Therewith he cast about his shoulders a mean scrip, all tattered, and a cord withal to hang it, and Eumaeus gave him a staff to his mind. So these twain went on their way, and the dogs and the herdsmen stayed behind to guard the steading. And the swineherd led his lord to the city in the guise of a beggar, a wretched man and an old, leaning on a staff; and sorry was the raiment wherewith he was clothed upon. But as they fared along the rugged path they drew near to the town, and came to the fair flowing spring, with a basin fashioned, whence the people of the city drew water. This well Ithacus and Neritus and Polyctor had builded. And around it was a thicket of alders that grow by the waters, all circlewise, and down the cold stream fell from a rock on high, and above was reared an altar to the Nymphs, whereat all wayfarers made offering. In that place Melanthius, son of Dolius, met them, leading his goats to feast the wooers, the best goats that were in all the herds; and two herdsmen bare him company. Now when he saw them he reviled them, and spake and hailed them, in terrible and evil fashion, and stirred the heart of Odysseus, saying:

'Now in very truth the vile is leading the vile, for god brings ever like to like! Say, whither art thou leading this glutton,—thou wretched swineherd,—this plaguy beggar, a kill-joy of the feast? He is one to stand about and rub his shoulders against many doorposts, begging for scraps of meat, not for swords or cauldrons. If thou wouldst give me the fellow to watch my steading and sweep out the stalls, and carry young branches to the kids, then he might drink whey and get him a stout thigh. Howbeit, since he is practised only in evil, he will not care to betake him to the labour of the farm, but rather chooses to go louting through the land asking alms to fill his insatiate belly. But now I will speak out and my word shall surely be accomplished. If ever he fares to the house of divine Odysseus, many a stool that men's hands hurl shall fly about his head, and break upon his ribs, as they pelt him through the house.'

Therewith, as he went past, he kicked Odysseus on the hip, in his witlessness, yet he drave him not from the path, but he abode steadfast. And Odysseus pondered whether he should rush upon him and take away his life with the staff, or lift him in his grasp and smite his head to the earth. Yet he hardened his heart to endure and refrained himself. And the swineherd looked at the other and rebuked him, and lifting up his hands prayed aloud:

'Nymphs of the well-water, daughters of Zeus, if ever Odysseus burned on your altars pieces of the thighs of rams or kids, in their covering of rich fat, fulfil for me this wish:—oh that he, even he, may come home, and that some god may bring him! Then would he scatter all thy vaunts, which now thou bearest insolently, wandering ever about the city, while evil shepherds destroy the flock.'

Then Melanthius, the goatherd, answered: 'Lo now, what a word has this evil-witted dog been saying! Some day I will take him in a black decked ship far from Ithaca, that he may bring me in much livelihood. Would God that Apollo, of the silver bow, might smite Telemachus to-day in the halls, or that he might fall before the wooers, so surely as for Odysseus the day of returning has in a far land gone by!'

So he spake and left them there as they walked slowly on. But Melanthius stepped forth, and came very speedily to the house of the prince, and straightway he went in and sat down among the wooers, over against Eurymachus, for he loved him above all the rest. And they that ministered set by him a portion of flesh, and the grave dame brought wheaten bread and set it by him to eat. Now Odysseus and the goodly swineherd drew near and stood by, and the sound of the hollow lyre rang around them, for Phemius was lifting up his voice amid the company in song, and Odysseus caught the swineherd by the hand, and spake, saying:

'Eumaeus, verily this is the fair house of Odysseus, and right easily might it be known and marked even among many. There is building upon building, and the court of the house is cunningly wrought with a wall and battlements, and well-fenced are the folding doors; no man may hold it in disdain. And I see that many men keep revel within, for the savour of the fat rises upward, and the voice of the lyre is heard there, which the gods have made to be the mate of the feast.'

Then didst thou make answer, swineherd Eumaeus: 'Easily thou knowest it, for indeed thou never lackest understanding. But come, let us advise us, how things shall fall out here. Either do thou go first within the fair-lying halls, and join the company of the wooers, so will I remain here, or if thou wilt, abide here, and I will go before thy face, and tarry not long, lest one see thee without, and hurl at thee or strike thee. Look well to this, I bid thee.'

Then the steadfast goodly Odysseus answered him, saying: 'I mark, I heed, all this thou speakest to one with understanding. Do thou then go before me, and I will remain here, for well I know what it is to be smitten and hurled at. My heart is full of hardiness, for much evil have I suffered in perils of waves and war; let this be added to the tale of those. But a ravening belly may none conceal, a thing accursed, that works much ill for men. For this cause too the benched ships are furnished, that bear mischief to foemen over the unharvested seas.'

Thus they spake one to the other. And lo, a hound raised up his head and pricked his ears, even where he lay, Argos, the hound of Odysseus, of the hardy heart, which of old himself had bred, but had got no joy of him, for ere that, he went to sacred Ilios. Now in time past the young men used to lead the hound against wild goats and deer and hares; but as then, despised he lay (his master being afar) in the deep dung of mules and kine, whereof an ample bed was spread before the doors, till the thralls of Odysseus should carry it away to dung therewith his wide demesne. There lay the dog Argos, full of vermin. Yet even now when he was ware of Odysseus standing by, he wagged his tail and dropped both his ears, but nearer to his master he had not now the strength to draw. But Odysseus looked aside and wiped away a tear that he easily hid from Eumaeus, and straightway he asked him, saying:

'Eumaeus, verily this is a great marvel, this hound lying here in the dung. Truly he is goodly of growth, but I know not certainly if he have speed with this beauty, or if he be comely only, like as are men's trencher dogs that their lords keep for the pleasure of the eye.'

Then didst thou make answer, swineherd Eumaeus: 'In very truth this is the dog of a man that has died in a far land. If he were what once he was in limb and in the feats of the chase, when Odysseus left him to go to Troy, soon wouldst thou marvel at the sight of his swiftness and his strength. There was no beast that could flee from him in the deep places of the wood, when he was in pursuit; for even on a track he was the keenest hound. But now he is holden in an evil case, and his lord hath perished far from his own country, and the careless women take no charge of him. Nay, thralls are no more inclined to honest service when their masters have lost the dominion, for Zeus, of the far-borne voice, takes away the half of a man's virtue, when the day of slavery comes upon him.'

Therewith he passed within the fair-lying house, and went straight to the hall, to the company of the proud wooers. But upon Argos came the fate of black death even in the hour that he beheld Odysseus again, in the twentieth year.

Now godlike Telemachus was far the first to behold the swineherd as he came through the hall, and straightway then he beckoned and called him to his side. So Eumaeus looked about and took a settle that lay by him, where the carver was wont to sit dividing much flesh among the wooers that were feasting in the house. This seat he carried and set by the table of Telemachus over against him, and there sat down himself. And the henchman took a mess and served it him, and wheaten bread out of the basket.

And close behind him Odysseus entered the house in the guise of a beggar, a wretched man and an old, leaning on his staff, and clothed on with sorry raiment. And he sat down on the ashen threshold within the doorway, leaning against a pillar of cypress wood, which the carpenter on a time had deftly planed, and thereon made straight the line. And Telemachus called the swineherd to him, and took a whole loaf out of the fair basket, and of flesh so much as his hands could hold in their grasp, saying:

'Take and give this to the stranger, and bid him go about and beg himself of all the wooers in their turn, for shame is an ill mate of a needy man.'

So he spake, and the swineherd went when he heard that saying, and stood by and spake to him winged words:

'Stranger, Telemachus gives thee these and bids thee go about and beg of all the wooers in their turn, for, he says, "shame ill becomes a beggar man."'

Then Odysseus of many counsels answered him and said: 'King Zeus, grant me that Telemachus may be happy among men, and may he have all his heart's desire!'

Therewith he took the gift in both hands, and set it there before his feet on his unsightly scrip. Then he ate meat so long as the minstrel was singing in the halls. When he had done supper, and the divine minstrel was ending his song, then the wooers raised a clamour through the halls; but Athene stood by Odysseus, son of Laertes, and moved him to go gathering morsels of bread among the wooers, and learn which were righteous and which unjust. Yet not even so was she minded to redeem one man of them from an evil fate. So he set out, beginning on the right, to ask of each man, stretching out his hand on every side, as though he were a beggar from of old. And they pitied him, and gave him somewhat, and were amazed at him, asking one another who he was and whence he came?

Then Melanthius, the goatherd, spake among them:

'Listen, ye wooers of the renowned queen, concerning this stranger, for verily I have seen him before. The swineherd truly was his guide hither, but of him I have no certain knowledge, whence he avows him to be born.'

So spake he, but Antinous rebuked the swineherd, saying: 'Oh notorious swineherd, wherefore, I pray thee, didst thou bring this man to the city? Have we not vagrants enough besides, plaguy beggars, kill-joys of the feast? Dost thou count it a light thing that they assemble here, and devour the living of thy master, but thou must needs call in this man too?'

Then didst thou make answer, swineherd Eumaeus: 'Antinous, no fair words are these of thine, noble though thou art. For who ever himself seeks out and bids to the feast a stranger from afar, save only one of those that are craftsmen of the people, a prophet or a healer of ills, or a shipwright, or even a godlike minstrel, who can delight all with his song? Nay, these are the men that are welcome over all the wide earth. But none would call a beggar to the banquet, to be a torment to himself. But thou art ever hard above all the other wooers to the servants of Odysseus, and, beyond all, to me; but behold, I care not, so long as my mistress, the constant Penelope, lives in the halls and godlike Telemachus.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'Be silent, answer him not, I pray thee, with many words, for Antinous is wont ever to chide us shamefully with bitter speech, yea, and urges the others thereto.'

Therewithal he spake winged words to Antinous: 'Antinous, verily thou hast a good care for me, as it were a father for his son, thou that biddest me drive our guest from the hall with a harsh command. God forbid that such a thing should be! Take somewhat and give it him: lo, I grudge it not; nay, I charge thee to do it. And herein regard not my mother, nor any of the thralls that are in the house of divine Odysseus. Nay, but thou hast no such thought in thy heart, for thou art far more fain to eat thyself than to give to another.'

Then Antinous answered him and spake, saying: 'Telemachus, proud of speech, and unrestrained in fury, what word hast thou spoken? If all the wooers should vouchsafe him as much as I, this house would keep him far enough aloof even for three months' space.'

So he spake, and seized the footstool whereon he rested his smooth feet as he sat at the feast, and showed it from beneath the table where it lay. But all the others gave somewhat and filled the wallet with bread and flesh; yea, and Odysseus was even now going back to the threshold, presently to taste of the bounty of the Achaeans, but he halted by Antinous, and spake to him, saying:

'Friend, give me somewhat; for methinks thou art not the basest of the Achaeans, but the best man of them all, for thou art like a king. Wherefore thou shouldest give me a portion of bread, and that a better than the others; so would I make thee renowned over all the wide earth. For I too, once had a house of mine own among men, a rich man with a wealthy house, and many a time would I give to a wanderer, what manner of man soever he might be, and in whatsoever need he came. And I had thralls out of number, and all else in plenty, wherewith folk live well and have a name for riches. But Zeus, the son of Cronos, made me desolate of all,—for surely it was his will,—who sent me with wandering sea-robbers to go to Egypt, a far road, to my ruin. And in the river Aegyptus I stayed my curved ships. Then verily I bade my loved companions to abide there by the ships, and to guard the ship, and I sent forth scouts to range the points of outlook. Now they gave place to wantonness, being the fools of their own force, and soon they fell to wasting the fields of the Egyptians, exceeding fair, and carried away their wives and infant children, and slew the men. And the cry came quickly to the city, and the people heard the shout and came forth at the breaking of the day; and all the plain was filled with footmen and horsemen and with the glitter of bronze. And Zeus, whose joy is in the thunder, sent an evil panic upon my company, and none durst stand and face the foe: for danger encompassed us on every side. There they slew many of us with the edge of the sword, and others they led up with them alive to work for them perforce. But they gave me to a friend who met them, to take to Cyprus, even to Dmetor, son of Iasus, who ruled mightily over Cyprus; and thence, behold, am I now come hither in sore distress.'

Then Antinous answered, and spake, saying: 'What god hath brought this plague hither to trouble the feast? Stand forth thus in the midst, away from my table, lest thou come soon to a bitter Egypt and a sad Cyprus; for a bold beggar art thou and a shameless. Thou standest by all in turn and recklessly they give to thee, for they hold not their hand nor feel any ruth in giving freely of others' goods, for that each man has plenty by him.'

Then Odysseus of many counsels drew back and answered him: 'Lo now, I see thou hast not wisdom with thy beauty! From out of thine own house thou wouldest not give even so much as a grain of salt to thy suppliant, thou who now even at another's board dost sit, and canst not find it in thy heart to take of the bread and give it me, where there is plenty to thy hand.'

He spake, and Antinous waxed yet more wroth at heart, and looked askance at him and spake winged words:

'Henceforth, methinks, thou shalt not get thee out with honour from the hall, seeing thou dost even rail upon me.'

Therewith he caught up the foot-stool and smote Odysseus on the right shoulder, at the upper end of the back. But he stood firm as a rock, nor reeled he beneath the blow of Antinous, but shook his head in silence, brooding evil in the deep of his heart. Then he went back to the threshold, and sat him there, and laid down his well-filled scrip, and spake among the wooers:

'Hear me, ye wooers of the renowned queen, and I will say what my spirit within me bids me. Verily there is neither pain nor grief of heart, when a man is smitten in battle fighting for his own possessions, whether cattle or white sheep. But now Antinous hath stricken me for my wretched belly's sake, a thing accursed, that works much ill for men. Ah, if indeed there be gods and Avengers of beggars, may the issues of death come upon Antinous before his wedding!'

Then Antinous, son of Eupeithes, answered him: 'Sit and eat thy meat in quiet, stranger, or get thee elsewhere, lest the young men drag thee by hand or foot through the house for thy evil words, and strip all thy flesh from off thee.'

Even so he spake, and they were all exceeding wroth at his word. And on this wise would one of the lordly young men speak:

'Antinous, thou didst ill to strike the hapless wanderer, doomed man that thou art,—if indeed there be a god in heaven. Yea and the gods, in the likeness of strangers from far countries, put on all manner of shapes, and wander through the cities, beholding the violence and the righteousness of men.'

So the wooers spake, but he heeded not their words. Now Telemachus nursed in his heart a mighty grief at the smiting of Odysseus, yet he let no tear fall from his eyelids to the ground, but shook his head in silence, brooding evil in the deep of his heart.

Now when wise Penelope heard of the stranger being smitten in the halls, she spake among her maidens, saying:

'Oh that Apollo, the famed archer, may so smite thee thyself, Antinous!'

And the house-dame, Eurynome, answered her, saying: 'Oh that we might win fulfilment of our prayers! So should not one of these men come to the fair-throned Dawn.'

And wise Penelope answered her: 'Nurse, they are all enemies, for they all devise evil continually, but of them all Antinous is the most like to black fate. Some hapless stranger is roaming about the house, begging alms of the men, as his need bids him; and all the others filled his wallet and gave him somewhat, but Antinous smote him between his right shoulder and the back with a stool.'

So she spake among her maidens, sitting in her chamber, while goodly Odysseus was at meat. Then she called to her the goodly swineherd and spake, saying:

'Go thy way, goodly Eumaeus, and bid the stranger come hither, that I may speak him a word of greeting, and ask him if haply he has heard tidings of Odysseus of the hardy heart, or seen him with his eyes; for he seems like one that has wandered far.'

Then didst thou make answer, swineherd Eumaeus: 'Queen, oh that the Achaeans would hold their peace! so would he charm thy very heart, such things doth he say. For I kept him three nights and three days I held him in the steading, for to me he came first when he fled from the ship, yet he had not made an end of the tale of his affliction. Even as when a man gazes on a singer, whom the gods have taught to sing words of yearning joy to mortals, and they have a ceaseless desire to hear him, so long as he will sing; even so he charmed me, sitting by me in the halls. He says that he is a friend of Odysseus and of his house, one that dwells in Crete, where is the race of Minos. Thence he has come hither even now, with sorrow by the way, onward and yet onward wandering; and he stands to it that he has heard tidings of

Odysseus nigh at hand and yet alive in the fat land of the men of Thesprotia; and he is bringing many treasures to his home.'

Then wise Penelope answered him, saying: 'Go, call him hither, that he may speak to me face to face. But let these men sit in the doorway and take their pleasure, or even here in the house, since their heart is glad. For their own wealth lies unspoiled at home, bread and sweet wine, and thereon do their servants feed. But they resorting to our house day by day sacrifice oxen and sheep and fat goats, and keep revel and drink the dark wine recklessly; and, lo, our great wealth is wasted, for there is no man now alive, such as Odysseus was, to keep ruin from the house. Oh, if Odysseus might come again to his own country; soon would he and his son avenge the violence of these men!'

Even so she spake, and Telemachus sneezed loudly, and around the roof rang wondrously. And Penelope laughed, and straightway spake to Eumaeus winged words:

'Go, call me the stranger, even so, into my presence. Dost thou not mark how my son has sneezed a blessing on all my words? Wherefore no half-wrought doom shall befal the wooers every one, nor shall any avoid death and the fates. Yet another thing will I say, and do thou ponder it in thy heart. If I shall find that he has spoken nought but truth, I will clothe him with a mantle and a doublet, goodly raiment.'

So she spake, and the swineherd departed when he heard that saying, and stood by the stranger and spake winged words:

'Father and stranger, wise Penelope, the mother of Telemachus, is calling for thee, and her mind bids her inquire as touching her lord, albeit she has sorrowed much already. And if she shall find that thou hast spoken nought but truth, she will clothe thee in a mantle and a doublet, whereof thou standest most in need. Moreover thou shalt beg thy bread through the land and shalt fill thy belly, and whosoever will, shall give to thee.'

Then the steadfast goodly Odysseus answered him, saying: 'Eumaeus, soon would I tell all the truth to the daughter of Icarius, wise Penelope, for well I know his story, and we have borne our travail together. But somewhat I fear the throng of the froward wooers, whose outrage and violence reach even to the iron heaven. For even now, as I was going through the house, when this man struck and pained me sore, and that for no ill deed, neither Telemachus nor any other kept off the blow. Wherefore now, bid Penelope tarry in the halls, for all her eagerness, till the going down of the sun, and then let her ask me concerning her lord, as touching the day of his returning, and let her give me a seat yet nearer to the fire, for behold, I have sorry raiment, and thou knowest it thyself, since I made my supplication first to thee.'

Even so he spake, and the swineherd departed when he heard that saying. And as he crossed the threshold Penelope spake to him:

'Thou bringest him not, Eumaeus: what means the wanderer hereby? Can it be that he fears some one out of measure, or is he even ashamed of tarrying in the house? A shamefaced man makes a bad beggar.'

Then didst thou make answer, swineherd Eumaeus. 'He speaks aright, and but as another would deem, in that he shuns the outrage of overweening men. Rather would he have thee wait till the going down of the sun. Yea, and it is far meeter for thyself, O queen, to utter thy word to the stranger alone, and to listen to his speech.'

Then the wise Penelope answered: 'The stranger deems as a man of understanding, and it may well be even so. For there are no mortal men, methinks, so wanton as these, and none that devise such infatuate deeds.'

So she spake, and the goodly swineherd departed into the throng of the wooers, when he had showed her all his message. And straightway he spake to Telemachus winged words, holding his head close to him, that the others might not hear:

'Friend, I am going hence to look after thy swine and the things of the farm, thy livelihood and mine; but do thou take charge of all that is here. Yet first look to thyself and take heed that no evil comes nigh thee, for many of the Achaeans have ill will against us, whom may Zeus confound before their mischief falls on us!'

And wise Telemachus answered him, and said: 'Even so shall it be, father; and do thou get thee on thy way, when thou hast supped. And in the morning come again, and bring fair victims for sacrifice. And all these matters will be a care to me and to the deathless gods.'

Thus he spake, and the other sat down again on the polished settle; and when he had satisfied his heart with meat and drink, he went on his way to the swine, leaving the courts and the hall full of feasters; and they were making merry with dance and song, for already it was close on eventide.

BOOK XVIII

The fighting at fists of Odysseus with Irus. His admonitions to Amphinomus. Penelope appears before the wooers, and draws presents from them.

Then up came a common beggar, who was wont to beg through the town of Ithaca, one that was known among all men for ravening greed, for his endless eating and drinking, yet he had no force or might, though he was bulky enough to look on. Arnaeus was his name, for so had his good mother given it him at his birth, but all the young men called him Irus, because he ran on errands, whensoever any might bid him. So now he came, and would have driven Odysseus from his own house, and began reviling him, and spake winged words:

'Get thee hence, old man, from the doorway, lest thou be even haled out soon by the foot. Seest thou not that all are now giving me the wink, and bidding me drag thee forth? Nevertheless, I feel shame of the task. Nay get thee up, lest our quarrel soon pass even to blows.'

Then Odysseus of many counsels looked askance upon him, and spake saying: 'Sir, neither in deed nor word do I harm thee, nor do I grudge that any should give to thee, yea though it were a good handful. But this threshold will hold us both and thou hast no need to be jealous for the sake of other men's goods. Thou seemest to me to be a wanderer, even as I am, and the gods it is that are like to give us gain. Only provoke me not overmuch to buffeting, lest thou anger me, and old though I be I defile thy breast and lips with blood. Thereby should I have the greater quiet to-morrow, for methinks that thou shalt never again come to the hall of Odysseus, son of Laertes.'

Then the beggar Irus spake unto him in anger: 'Lo now, how trippingly and like an old cinder-wife this glutton speaks, on whom I will work my evil will, and smite him right and left, and drive all the teeth from his jaws to the ground, like the tusks of a swine that spoils the corn. Gird thyself now, that even these men all may know our mettle in fight. Nay, how shouldst thou do battle with a younger man than thou?'

Thus did they whet each the other's rage right manfully before the lofty doors upon the polished threshold. And the mighty prince Antinous heard the twain, and sweetly he laughed out, and spake among the wooers:

'Friends, never before has there been such a thing; such goodly game has a god brought to this house. The stranger yonder and Irus are bidding each other to buffets. Quick, let us match them one against the other.'

Then all at the word leaped up laughing, and gathered round the ragged beggars, and Antinous, son of Eupeithes, spake among them saying: 'Hear me, ye lordly wooers, and I will say somewhat. Here are goats' bellies lying at the fire, that we laid by at supper-time and filled with fat and blood. Now whichsoever of the twain wins, and shows himself the better man, let him stand up and take his choice of these puddings. And further, he shall always eat at our feasts, nor will we suffer any other beggar to come among us and ask for alms.'

So spake Antinous, and the saying pleased them well. Then Odysseus of many counsels spake among them craftily:

'Friends, an old man and foredone with travail may in no wise fight with a younger. But my belly's call is urgent on me, that evil-worker, to the end that I may be subdued with stripes. But come now, swear me all of you a strong oath, so that none, for the sake of shewing a favour to Irus, may strike me a foul blow with heavy hand and subdue me by violence to my foe.'

So he spake, and they all swore not to strike him, as he bade them. Now when they had sworn and done that oath, the mighty prince Telemachus once more spake among them:

'Stranger, if thy heart and lordly spirit urge thee to rid thee of this fellow, then fear not any other of the Achaeans, for whoso strikes thee shall have to fight with many. Thy host am I, and the princes consent with me, Antinous and Eurymachus, men of wisdom both.'

So spake he and they all consented thereto. Then Odysseus girt his rags about his loins, and let his thighs be seen, goodly and great, and his broad shoulders and breast and mighty arms were manifest. And Athene came nigh and made greater the limbs of the shepherd of the people. Then the wooers were exceedingly amazed, and thus would one speak looking to his neighbour:

'Right soon will Irus, un-Irused, have a bane of his own bringing, such a thigh as that old man shows from out his rags!'

So they spake, and the mind of Irus was pitifully stirred; but even so the servants girded him and led him out perforce in great fear, his flesh trembling on his limbs. Then Antinous chid him, and spake and hailed him:

'Thou braggart, better for thee that thou wert not now, nor ever hadst been born, if indeed thou tremblest before this man, and art so terribly afraid; an old man too he is, and foredone with the travail that is come upon him. But I will tell thee plainly, and it shall surely be accomplished. If this man prevail against thee and prove thy master, I will cast thee into a black ship, and send thee to the mainland to Echetus the king, the maimer of all mankind, who will cut off thy nose and ears with the pitiless steel, and draw out thy vitals and give them raw to dogs to rend.'

So he spake, and yet greater trembling gat hold of the limbs of Irus, and they led him into the ring, and the twain put up their hands. Then the steadfast goodly Odysseus mused in himself whether he should smite him in such wise that his life should leave his body, even there where he fell, or whether he should strike him lightly, and stretch him on the earth. And as he thought thereon, this seemed to him the better way, to strike lightly, that the Achaeans might not know him, who he was. Then the twain put up their hands, and Irus struck at the right shoulder, but the other smote him on his neck beneath the ear, and crushed in the bones, and straightway the red blood gushed up through his mouth, and with a moan he fell in the dust, and drave together his teeth as he kicked the ground. But the proud wooers threw up their hands, and died outright for laughter. Then Odysseus seized him by the foot, and dragged him forth through the doorway, till he came to the courtyard and the gates of the corridor, and he set him down and rested him against the courtyard wall, and put his staff in his hands, and uttering his voice spake to him winged words:

'Sit thou there now, and scare off swine and dogs, and let not such an one as thou be lord over strangers and beggars, pitiful as thou art, lest haply some worse thing befal thee.'

Thus he spake, and cast about his shoulders his mean scrip all tattered, and the cord therewith to hang it, and he gat him back to the threshold, and sat him down there again. Now the wooers went within laughing sweetly, and greeted him, saying:

'May Zeus, stranger, and all the other deathless gods give thee thy dearest wish, even all thy heart's desire, seeing that thou hast made that insatiate one to cease from his begging in the land! Soon will we take him over to the mainland, to Echetus the king, the maimer of all mankind.'

So they spake, and goodly Odysseus rejoiced in the omen of the words. And Antinous set by him the great pudding, stuffed with fat and blood, and Amphinomus took up two loaves from the basket, and set them by him and pledged him in a golden cup, and spake saying:

'Father and stranger, hail! may happiness be thine in the time to come; but as now, thou art fast holden in many sorrows.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered him saying: 'Amphinomus, verily thou seemest to me a prudent man enough; for such too was the father of whom thou art sprung, for I have heard the fair fame of him, how that Nisus of Dulichium was a good man and a rich, and his son they say thou art, and thou seemest a man of understanding. Wherefore I will tell thee, and do thou mark and listen to me. Nought feebler doth the earth nurture than man, of all the creatures that breathe and move upon the face of the earth. Lo, he thinks that he shall never suffer evil in time to come, while the gods give him happiness, and his limbs move lightly. But when again the blessed gods have wrought for him sorrow, even so he bears it, as he must, with a steadfast heart. For the spirit of men upon the earth is even as their day, that comes upon them from the father of gods and men. Yea, and I too once was like to have been prosperous among men, but many an infatuate deed I did, giving place to mine own hardihood and strength, and trusting to my father and my brethren. Wherefore let no man for ever be lawless any more, but keep quietly the gifts of the gods, whatsoever they may give. Such infatuate deeds do I see the wooers devising, as they waste the wealth, and hold in no regard the wife of a man, who, methinks, will not much longer be far from his friends and his own land; nay he is very near. But for thee, may some god withdraw thee hence to thy home, and mayst thou not meet him in the day when he returns to his own dear country! For not without blood, as I deem, will they be sundered, the wooers and Odysseus, when once he shall have come beneath his own roof.'

Thus he spake, and poured an offering and then drank of the honey-sweet wine, and again set the cup in the hands of the arrayer of the people. But the other went back through the house, sad at heart and bowing his head; for verily his soul boded evil. Yet even so he avoided not his fate, for Athene had bound him likewise to be slain outright at the hands and by the spear of Telemachus. So he sat down again on the high seat whence he had arisen.

Now the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, put it into the heart of the daughter of Icarius, wise Penelope, to show herself to the wooers, that she might make their heart greatly to swell for joy, and that she might win yet more worship from her lord and her son than heretofore. So she laughed an idle laugh, and spake to the nurse, and hailed her, saying:

'Eurynome, my heart yearns, though before I had no such desire, to show myself to the wooers, hateful as they are. I would also say a word to my son, that will be for his weal, namely, that he should not for ever consort with the proud wooers, who speak friendly with their lips, but imagine evil in the latter end.'

Then the housewife, Eurynome, spake to her saying: 'Yea my child, all this thou hast spoken as is meet. Go then, and declare thy word to thy son and hide it not, but first wash thee and anoint thy face, and go not as thou art with thy cheeks all stained with tears. Go, for it is little good to sorrow always, and never cease. And lo, thy son is now of an age to hear thee, he whom thou hast above all things prayed the gods that thou mightest see with a beard upon his chin.'

Then wise Penelope answered her, saying: 'Eurynome, speak not thus comfortably to me, for all thy love, bidding me to wash and be anointed with ointment. For the gods that keep Olympus destroyed my bloom, since the day that he departed in the hollow ships. But bid Autonoe and Hippodameia come to me, to stand by my side in the halls. Alone I will not go among men, for I am ashamed.'

So she spake, and the old woman passed through the chamber to tell the maidens, and hasten their coming.

Thereon the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, had another thought. She shed a sweet slumber over the daughter of Icarius, who sank back in sleep, and all her joints were loosened as she lay in the chair, and the fair goddess the while was giving her gifts immortal, that all the Achaeans might marvel at her. Her fair face first she steeped with beauty imperishable, such as that wherewith the crowned Cytherea is anointed, when she goes to the lovely dances of the Graces. And she made her taller and greater to behold, and made her whiter than new-sawn ivory. Now when she had wrought thus, that fair goddess departed, and the white-armed handmaidens came forth from the chamber and drew nigh with a sound of voices. Then sweet sleep left hold of Penelope, and she rubbed her cheeks with her hands, and said:

'Surely soft slumber wrapped me round, most wretched though I be. Oh! that pure Artemis would give me so soft a death even now, that I might no more waste my life in sorrow of heart, and longing for the manifold excellence of my dear lord, for that he was foremost of the Achaeans.'

With this word she went down from the shining upper chamber, not alone, for two handmaidens likewise bare her company. But when the fair lady had now come to the wooers, she stood by the doorpost of the well-builded room, holding her glistening tire before her face, and on either side of her stood a faithful handmaid. And straightway the knees of the wooers were loosened, and their hearts were enchanted with love, and each one uttered a prayer that he might be her bed-fellow. But she spake to Telemachus, her dear son:

'Telemachus, thy mind and thy thoughts are no longer stable as they were. While thou wast still a child, thou hadst a yet nimbler and more gainful wit, but now that thou art great of growth, and art come to the measure of manhood, and a stranger looking to thy stature and thy beauty might say that thou must be some rich man's son, thy mind and thy thoughts are no longer right as of old. For lo, what manner of deed has been done in these halls, in that thou hast suffered thy guest to be thus shamefully dealt with! How would it be now, if the stranger sitting in our house, were thus to come to some harm all through this evil handling? Shame and disgrace would be thine henceforth among men.'

Then wise Telemachus answered her: 'Mother mine, as to this matter I count it no blame that thou art angered. Yet have I knowledge and understanding of each thing of the good and of the evil; but heretofore I was a child. Howbeit I cannot devise all things according to wisdom, for these men in their evil counsel drive me from my will, on this side and on that, and there is none to aid me. Howsoever this battle between Irus and the stranger did not fall out as the wooers would have had it, but the stranger proved the better man. Would to Father Zeus and Athene and Apollo, that the wooers in our halls were even now thus vanquished, and wagging their heads, some in the court, and some within the house, and that the limbs of each man were loosened in such fashion as Irus yonder sits now, by the courtyard gates wagging his head, like a drunken man, and cannot stand upright on his feet, nor yet get him home to his own place, seeing that his limbs are loosened!'

Thus they spake one to another. But Eurymachus spake to Penelope, saying:

'Daughter of Icarius, wise Penelope, if all the Achaeans in Iasian Argos could behold thee, even a greater press of wooers would feast in your halls from to-morrow's dawn, since thou dost surpass all women in beauty and stature, and within in wisdom of mind.'

Then wise Penelope answered him: 'Eurymachus, surely my excellence, both of face and form, the gods destroyed in the day when the Argives embarked for Ilios, and with them went my lord Odysseus. If but he might come and watch over this my life, greater thus would be my fame and fairer! But now am I in sorrow; such a host of ills some god has sent against me. Ah, well do I remember, when he set forth and left his own country, how he took me by the right hand at the wrist and spake, saying:

'Lady, methinks that all the goodly-greaved Achaeans will not win a safe return from Troy; for the Trojans too, they say, are good men at arms, as spearsmen, and bowmen, and drivers of fleet horses, such as ever most swiftly determine the great strife of equal battle. Wherefore I know not if the gods will suffer me to return, or whether I shall be cut off there in Troy; so do thou have a care for all these things. Be mindful of my father and my mother in the halls, even as now thou art, or yet more than now, while I am far away. But when thou seest thy son a bearded man, marry whom thou wilt and leave thine own house."

'Even so did he speak, and now all these things have an end. The night shall come when a hateful marriage shall find me out, me most luckless, whose good hap Zeus has taken away. But furthermore this sore trouble has come on my heart and soul; for this was not the manner of wooers in time past. Whoso wish to woo a good lady and the daughter of a rich man, and vie one with another, themselves bring with them oxen of their own and goodly flocks, a banquet for the friends of the bride, and they give the lady splendid gifts, but do not devour another's livelihood without atonement.'

Thus she spake, and the steadfast goodly Odysseus rejoiced because she drew from them gifts, and beguiled their souls with soothing words, while her heart was set on other things.

Then Antinous, son of Eupeithes, answered her again: 'Daughter of Icarius, wise Penelope, the gifts which any of the Achaeans may choose to bring hither, do thou take; for it is not well to refuse a gift. But we for our part will neither go to our lands nor otherwhere, before thou art wedded to the best man of the Achaeans.'

So spake Antinous, and the saying pleased them well, and each man sent a henchman to bring his gifts. For Antinous his henchman bare a broidered robe, great and very fair, wherein were golden brooches, twelve in all, fitted with well bent clasps. And the henchman straightway bare Eurymachus a golden chain of curious work, strung with amber beads, shining like the sun. And his squires bare for Eurydamas a pair of ear-rings, with three drops well wrought, and much grace shone from them. And out of the house of Peisander the prince, the son of Polyctor, the squire brought a necklet, a very lovely jewel. And likewise the Achaeans brought each one some other beautiful gift.

Then the fair lady went aloft to her upper chamber, and her attendant maidens bare for her the lovely gifts, while the wooers turned to dancing and the delight of song, and therein took their pleasure, and awaited the coming of eventide. And dark evening came on them at their pastime. Anon they set up three braziers in the halls, to give them light, and on these they laid firewood all around, faggots seasoned long since and sere, and new split with the axe, and to them they set burning pine-brands. And the maids of Odysseus, of the hardy heart, in turn were rousing the light of the flames. Then the prince Odysseus of many counsels himself spake among them saying:

'Ye maidens of Odysseus, the lord so long afar, get ye into the chambers where the honoured queen abides, and twist the yarn at her side, and gladden her heart as ye sit in the chamber, or card the wools with your hands; but I will minister light to all these that are here. For even if they are minded to wait the throned Dawn, they shall not outstay me, so long enduring am I.'

So he spake, but they laughed and looked one at the other.

And the fair Melantho chid him shamefully, Melantho that Dolius begat, but Penelope reared, and entreated her tenderly as she had been her own child, and gave her playthings to her heart's desire. Yet, for all that, the sorrow of Penelope touched not her heart, but she loved Eurymachus and was his paramour. Now she chid Odysseus with railing words:

'Wretched guest, surely thou art some brain-struck man, seeing that thou dost not choose to go and sleep at a smithy, or at some place of common resort, but here thou pratest much and boldly among many lords and hast no fear at heart. Verily wine has got about thy wits, or perchance thou art always of this mind, and so thou dost babble idly. Art thou beside thyself for joy, because thou hast beaten the beggar Irus? Take heed lest a better man than Irus rise up presently against thee, to lay his mighty hands about thy head and bedabble thee with blood, and send thee hence from the house.'

Then Odysseus of many counsels looked askance on her, and said: 'Yea, straight will I go yonder and tell Telemachus hereof, thou shameless thing, for this thy speech, that forthwith he may cut thee limb from limb.'

So he spake, and with his saying scared away the women, who fled through the halls, and the knees of each were loosened for fear, for they deemed that his words were true. But Odysseus took his stand by the burning braziers, tending the lights, and gazed on all the men: but far other matters he pondered in his heart, things not to be unfulfilled.

Now Athene would in no wise suffer the lordly wooers to abstain from biting scorn, that the pain might sink yet the deeper into the heart of Odysseus, son of Laertes. So Eurymachus, son of Polybus, began to speak among them, girding at Odysseus, and so made mirth for his friends:

'Hear me ye wooers of the queen renowned, that I may say that which my spirit within me bids me. Not without the gods' will has this man come to the house of Odysseus; methinks at least that the torch-light flares forth from that head of his for there are no hairs on it, nay never so thin.'

He spake and withal addressed Odysseus, waster of cities: Stranger, wouldest thou indeed be my hireling, if I would take thee for my man, at an upland farm, and thy wages shall be assured thee, and there shalt thou gather stones for dykes and plant tall trees? There would I provide thee bread continual, and clothe thee with raiment, and give thee shoes for thy feet. Howbeit, since thou art practised only in evil, thou wilt not care to go to the labours of the field, but wilt choose rather to go louting through the land, that thou mayst have wherewithal to feed thine insatiate belly.'

Then Odysseus of many counsels answered him and said: 'Eurymachus, would that there might be a trial of labour between us twain, in the season of spring, when the long days begin! In the deep grass might it be, and I should have a crooked scythe, and thou another like it, that we might try each the other in the matter of labour, fasting till late eventide, and grass there should be in plenty. Or would again, that there were oxen to drive, the best there may be, large and tawny, both well filled with fodder, of equal age and force to bear the yoke and of strength untiring! And it should be a field of four ploughgates, and the clod should yield before the ploughshare. Then shouldest thou see me, whether or no I would cut a clean furrow unbroken before me. Or would that this very day Cronion might waken war whence he would, and that I had a shield and two spears, and a helmet all of bronze, close fitting on my temples! Then shouldest thou see me mingling in the forefront of the battle, nor speak and taunt me with this my belly. Nay, thou art exceeding wanton and thy heart is hard, and thou thinkest thyself some great one and mighty, because thou consortest with few men and feeble. Ah, if Odysseus might but return and come to his own country, right soon would yonder doors full wide as they are, prove all too strait for thee in thy flight through the doorway!'

Thus he spake, and Eurymachus waxed yet the more wroth at heart, and looking askance at him spake to him winged words:

'Ah, wretch that thou art, right soon will I work thee mischief, so boldly thou pratest among many lords, and hast no fear at heart. Verily wine has got about thy wits, or perchance thou art always of this mind, and so thou dost babble idly. Art thou beside thyself for joy, because thou hast beaten the beggar Irus?'

Therewith he caught up a footstool, but Odysseus sat him down at the knees of Amphinomus of Dulichium, in dread of Eurymachus. And Eurymachus cast and smote the cupbearer on the right hand, and the ladle cup dropped to the ground with a clang, while the young man groaned and fell backwards in the dust. Then the wooers clamoured through the shadowy halls, and thus one would say looking to his neighbour:

'Would that our wandering guest had perished otherwhere, or ever he came hither; so should he never have made all this tumult in our midst! But now we are all at strife about beggars, and there will be no more joy of the good feast, for worse things have their way.'

Then the mighty prince Telemachus spake among them:

'Sirs, ye are mad; now ye no longer hide it that ye have eaten and drunken; some one of the gods is surely moving you. Nay, now that ye have feasted well, go home and lay you to rest, whenso your spirit bids; for as for me, I drive no man hence.'

Thus he spake, and they all bit their lips and marvelled at Telemachus, in that he spake boldly. Then Amphinomus made harangue, and spake among them, Amphinomus, the famous son of Nisus the prince, the son of Aretias:

'Friends, when a righteous word has been spoken, none surely would rebuke another with hard speech and be angry. Misuse ye not this stranger, neither any of the thralls that are in the house of godlike Odysseus. But come, let the winebearer pour for libation into each cup in turn, that after the drink-offering we may get us home to bed. But the stranger let us leave in the halls of Odysseus for a charge to Telemachus: for to his home has he come.'

Thus he spake, and his word was well-pleasing to them all. Then the lord Mulius mixed for them the bowl, the henchman of Dulichium, who was squire of Amphinomus. And he stood by all and served it to them in their turn; and they poured forth before the blessed gods, and drank the honey-sweet wine. Now when they had poured forth and had drunken to their hearts' content, they departed to lie down, each one to his own house.

BOOK XIX

Telemachus removes the arms out of the hall. Odysseus discourseth with Penelope. And is known by his nurse, but concealed. And the hunting of the boar upon that occasion related.

Now the goodly Odysseus was left behind in the hall, devising with Athene's aid the slaying of the wooers, and straightway he spake winged words to Telemachus:

'Telemachus, we must needs lay by the weapons of war within every one; and when the wooers miss them and ask thee concerning them, thou shalt beguile them with soft words, saying:

'Out of the smoke have I laid them by, since they are no longer like those that Odysseus left behind him of old, when he went to Troy, but they are wholly marred, so mightily hath passed upon them the vapour of fire. Moreover some god hath put into my heart this other and greater care, that perchance when ye are heated with wine, ye set a quarrel between you and wound one the other, and thereby shame the feast and the wooing; for iron of itself draws a man thereto.'

Thus he spake, and Telemachus hearkened to his dear father, and called forth to him the nurse Eurycleia and spake to her, saying:

'Nurse, come now I pray thee, shut up the women in their chambers till I shall have laid by in the armoury the goodly weapons of my father, which all uncared for the smoke dims in the hall, since my father went hence, and I was still but a child. Now I wish to lay them by where the vapour of the fire will not reach them.'

Then the good nurse Eurycleia answered him, saying: 'Ah, my child, if ever thou wouldest but take careful thought in such wise as to mind the house, and guard all this wealth! But come, who shall attend thee and bear the light, if thou hast thy way, since thou wouldest not that the maidens, who might have given light, should go before thee?'

Then wise Telemachus made answer to her: 'This stranger here, for I will keep no man in idleness who eats of my bread, even if he have come from afar.'

Thus he spake, and his word unwinged abode with her, and she closed the doors of the fair-lying chambers. Then they twain sprang up, Odysseus and his renowned son, and set to carry within the helmets and the bossy shields, and the sharp-pointed spears; and before them Pallas Athene bare a golden cresset and cast a most lovely light. Thereon Telemachus spake to his father suddenly:

'Father, surely a great marvel is this that I behold with mine eyes; meseems, at least, that the walls of the hall and the fair spaces between the pillars and the beams of pine, and the pillars that run aloft, are bright as it were with flaming fire. Verily some god is within, of those that hold the wide heaven.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered him and said: 'Hold thy peace and keep all this in thine heart and ask not hereof. Lo, this is the wont of the gods that hold Olympus. But do thou go and lay thee down, and I will abide here, that I may yet further provoke the maids and thy mother to answer; and she in her sorrow will ask me concerning each thing, one by one.'

So he spake, and Telemachus passed out through the hall to his chamber to lie down, by the light of the flaming torches, even to the chamber where of old he took his rest, when sweet sleep came over him. There now too he lay down and awaited the bright Dawn. But goodly Odysseus was left behind in the hall, devising with Athene's aid the slaying of the wooers.

Now forth from her chamber came the wise Penelope, like Artemis or golden Aphrodite, and they set a chair for her hard by before the fire, where she was wont to sit, a chair deftly turned and wrought with ivory and silver, which on a time the craftsman Icmalius had fashioned, and had joined thereto a footstool, that was part of the chair, whereon a great fleece was used to be laid. Here then, the wise Penelope sat her down, and next came white-armed handmaids from the women's chamber, and began to take away the many fragments of food, and the tables and the cups whence the proud lords had been drinking, and they cast the embers from the braziers on the floor, and piled many fresh logs upon them, to give light and warmth.

Then Melantho began to revile Odysseus yet a second time, saying: 'Stranger, wilt thou still be a plague to us here, wandering through the house in the night, and spying the women? Nay, get thee forth, thou wretched thing, and be content with thy supper, or straightway shalt thou even be smitten with a torch and so fare out of the doors.'

Then Odysseus of many counsels looked askance on her, and said: 'Good woman, what possesses thee to assail me thus out of an angry heart? Is it because I go filthy and am clothed about in sorry raiment, and beg through the land, for necessity is laid on me? This is the manner of beggars and of wandering men. For I too once had a house of mine own among men, a rich man with a wealthy house, and many a time would I give to a wanderer, what manner of man soever he might be, and in whatsoever need he came. And I had countless thralls, and all else in plenty, whereby folk live well and have a name for riches. But Zeus, the son of Cronos, made me desolate of all, for surely it was his will. Wherefore, woman, see that thou too lose not all the glory wherewith thou art now preeminent among the handmaids, as well may chance, if thy mistress be provoked to anger with thee, or if Odysseus come home, for there is yet a place for hope. And even if he hath perished as ye deem, and is never more to return, yet by Apollo's grace he hath so goodly a son, Telemachus, and none of the women works wantonness in his halls without his knowledge, for he is no longer of an age not to mark it.'

Thus he spake, and the wise Penelope heard him and rebuked the handmaid, and spake and hailed her:

'Thou shameless thing and unabashed, thy great sin is in nowise hidden from me, and thy blood shall be on thine own head for the same! For thou knewest right well, in that thou hadst heard it from my lips, how that I was minded to ask the stranger in my halls for tidings of my lord; for I am grievously afflicted.'

Therewith she spake likewise to the housedame, Eurynome, saying:

'Eurynome, bring hither a settle with a fleece thereon, that the stranger may sit and speak with me and hear my words, for I would ask him all his story.'

So she spake, and the nurse made haste and brought a polished settle, and cast a fleece thereon; and then the steadfast goodly Odysseus sat him down there, and the wise Penelope spake first, saying:

'Stranger, I will make bold first to ask thee this: who art thou of the sons of men, and whence? Where is thy city, and where are they that begat thee?'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered her and said: 'Lady, no one of mortal men in the wide world could find fault with thee, for thy fame goes up to the wide heaven, as doth the fame of a blameless king, one that fears the gods and reigns among many men and mighty, maintaining right, and the black earth bears wheat and barley, and the trees are laden with fruit, and the sheep bring forth and fail not, and the sea gives store of fish, and all out of his good guidance, and the people prosper under him. Wherefore do thou ask me now in thy house all else that thou wilt, but inquire not concerning my race and mine own country, lest as I think thereupon thou fill my heart the more with pains, for I am a man of many sorrows. Moreover it beseems me not to sit weeping and wailing in another's house, for it is little good to mourn always without ceasing, lest perchance one of the maidens, or even thyself, be angry with me and say that I swim in tears, as one that is heavy with wine.'

Then wise Penelope answered him, and said: 'Stranger, surely my goodliness both of face and form the gods destroyed, in the day when the Argives embarked for Ilios, and with them went my lord Odysseus. If but he might come and watch over this my life, greater and fairer thus would be my fame! But now am I in sorrow, such a host of ills some god has sent against me. For all the noblest that are princes in the isles, in Dulichium and Same and wooded Zacynthus, and they that dwell around even in clear-seen Ithaca, these are wooing me against my will, and devouring the house. Wherefore I take no heed of strangers, nor suppliants, nor at all of heralds, the craftsmen of the people. But I waste my heart away in longing for Odysseus; so they speed on my marriage and I weave a web of wiles. First some god put it into my heart to set up a great web in the halls, and thereat to weave a robe fine of woof and very wide; and anon I spake among them, saying:

"Ye princely youths, my wooers, now that goodly Odysseus is dead, do ye abide patiently, how eager soever to speed on this marriage of mine, till I finish the robe. I would not that the threads perish to no avail, even this shroud for the hero Laertes, against the day when the ruinous doom shall bring him low, of death that lays men at their length. So shall none of the Achaean women in the land count it blame in me, as well might be, were he to lie without a winding sheet, a man that had gotten great possessions."

'So spake I, and their high hearts consented thereto. So then in the daytime I would weave the mighty web, and in the night unravel the same, when I had let place the torches by me. Thus for the space of three years I hid the thing by craft and beguiled the minds of the Achaeans. But when the fourth year arrived, and the seasons came round as the months waned, and many days were accomplished, then it was that by help of the handmaids, shameless things and reckless, the wooers came and trapped me, and chid me loudly. Thus did I finish the web by no will of mine, for so I must. And now I can neither escape the marriage nor devise any further counsel, and my parents are instant with me to marry, and my son chafes while these men devour his livelihood, as he takes note of all; for by this time he has come to man's estate, and is full able to care for a household, being such an one as Zeus vouchsafes to honour. But even so tell me of thine own stock, whence thou art, for thou art not sprung of oak or rock, whereof old tales tell.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered her and said:

'O wife revered of Odysseus, son of Laertes, thou wilt never have done asking me about mine own race. Nay, but I will tell thee: yet surely thou wilt give me over to sorrows yet more than those wherein I am holden, for so it ever is when a man has been afar from his own country, so long as now I am, wandering in sore pain to many cities of mortals. Yet even so I will tell thee what thou askest and inquirest. There is a land called Crete in the midst of the wine-dark sea, a fair land and a rich, begirt with water, and therein are many men innumerable, and ninety cities. And all have not the same speech, but there is confusion of tongues; there dwell Achaeans and there too Cretans of Crete, high of heart, and Cydonians there and Dorians of waving plumes and goodly Pelasgians. And among these cities is the mighty city Cnosus, wherein Minos when he was nine years old began to rule, he who held converse with great Zeus, and was the father of my father, even of Deucalion, high of heart. Now Deucalion begat me and Idomeneus the prince. Howbeit, he had gone in his beaked ships up into Ilios, with the sons of Atreus; but my famed name is Aethon, being the younger of the twain and he was the first born and the better man. There I saw Odysseus, and gave him guest-gifts, for the might of the wind bare him too to Crete, as he was making for Troy land, and had driven him wandering past Malea. So he stayed his ships in Amnisus, whereby in the cave of Eilithyia, in havens hard to win, and scarce he escaped the tempest. Anon he came up to the city and asked for Idomeneus, saying that he was his friend and held by him in love and honour. But it was now the tenth or the eleventh dawn since Idomeneus had gone in his beaked ships up into Ilios. Then I led him to the house, and gave him good entertainment with all loving-kindness out of the plenty in my house, and for him and for the rest of his company, that went with him, I gathered and gave barley meal and dark wine out of the public store, and oxen to sacrifice to his heart's desire. There the goodly Achaeans abode twelve days, for the strong North Wind penned them there, and suffered them not so much as to hold their feet on land, for some angry god had roused it. On the thirteenth day the wind fell, and then they lifted anchor.'

So he told many a false tale in the likeness of truth, and her tears flowed as she listened, and her flesh melted. And even as the snow melts in the high places of the hills, the snow that the South-East wind has thawed, when the West has scattered it abroad, and as it wastes the river streams run full, even so her fair cheeks melted beneath her tears, as she wept her own lord, who even then was sitting by her. Now Odysseus had compassion of heart upon his wife in her lamenting, but his eyes kept steadfast between his eyelids as it were horn or iron, and craftily he hid his tears. But she, when she had taken her fill of tearful lamentation, answered him in turn and spake, saying:

'Friend as thou art, even now I think to make trial of thee, and learn whether in very truth thou didst entertain my lord there in thy halls with his godlike company, as thou sayest. Tell me what manner of raiment he was clothed in about his body, and what manner of man he was himself, and tell me of his fellows that went with him.'

Then Odysseus of many counsels answered her saying: 'Lady, it is hard for one so long parted from him to tell thee all this, for it is now the twentieth year since he went thither and left my country. Yet even so I will tell thee as I see him in spirit. Goodly Odysseus wore a thick purple mantle, twofold, which had a brooch fashioned in gold, with a double covering for the pins, and on the face of it was a curious device: a hound in his forepaws held a dappled fawn and gazed on it as it writhed. And all men marvelled at the workmanship how, wrought as they were in gold, the hound was gazing on the fawn and strangling it, and the fawn was writhing with his feet and striving to flee. Moreover, I marked the shining doublet about his body, as it were the skin of a dried onion, so smooth it was, and glistering as the sun; truly many women looked thereon and wondered. Yet another thing will I tell thee, and do thou ponder it in thy heart. I know not if Odysseus was thus clothed upon at home, or if one of his fellows gave him the raiment as he went on board the swift ship, or even it may be some stranger, seeing that to many men was Odysseus dear, for few of the Achaeans were his peers. I, too, gave him a sword of bronze, and a fair purple mantle with double fold, and a tasseled doublet, and I sent him away with all honour on his decked ship. Moreover, a henchman bare him company, somewhat older than he, and I will tell thee of him too, what manner of man he was. He was round-shouldered, brown-skinned, and curly-haired, his name Eurybates; and Odysseus honoured him above all his company, because in all things he was like-minded with himself.'

So he spake, and in her heart he stirred yet more the desire of weeping, as she knew the certain tokens that Odysseus showed her. So when she had taken her fill of tearful lament, then she answered him, and spake saying:

'Now verily, stranger, thou that even before wert held in pity, shalt be dear and honourable in my halls, for it was I who gave him these garments, even such as thou namest, and folded them myself, and brought them from the chamber, and added besides the shining brooch to be his jewel. But him I shall never welcome back, returned home to his own dear country. Wherefore with an evil fate it was that Odysseus went hence in the hollow ship to see that evil Ilios, never to be named.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered her saying: 'Wife revered of Odysseus, son of Laertes, destroy not now thy fair flesh any more, nor waste thy heart with weeping for thy lord;—not that I count it any blame in thee, for many a woman weeps that has lost her gentle lord, to whom she has borne children in her love,—albeit a far other man than Odysseus, who, they say, is like the gods. Nay, cease from thy lamenting, and lay up my word in thy heart; for I will tell thee without fail, and will hide nought, how but lately I heard tell of the return of Odysseus, that he is nigh at hand, and yet alive in the fat land of the men of Thesprotia, and is bringing with him many choice treasures, as he begs through the land. But he has lost his dear companions and his hollow ship on the wine-dark sea, on his way from the isle Thrinacia: for Zeus and Helios had a grudge against him, because his company had slain the kine of Helios. They for their part all perished in the wash of the sea, but the wave cast him on the keel of the ship out upon the coast, on the land of the Phaeacians that are near of kin to the gods, and they did him all honour heartily as unto a god, and gave him many gifts, and themselves would fain have sent him scathless home. Yea and Odysseus would have been here long since, but he thought it more profitable to gather wealth, as he journeyed over wide lands; so truly is Odysseus skilled in gainful arts above all men upon earth, nor may any mortal men contend with him. So Pheidon king of the Thesprotians told me. Moreover he sware, in mine own presence, as he poured the drink-offering in his house, that the ship was drawn down to the sea and his company were ready, who were to convey him to his own dear country. But me he first sent off, for it chanced that a ship of the Thesprotians was on her way to Dulichium, a land rich in grain. And he showed me all the wealth that Odysseus had gathered, yea it would suffice for his children after him, even to the tenth generation, so great were the treasures he had stored in the chambers of the king. As for him he had gone, he said, to Dodona to hear the counsel of Zeus, from the high leafy oak tree of the god, how he should return to his own dear country, having now been long afar, whether openly or by stealth.

'In this wise, as I tell thee, he is safe and will come shortly, and very near he is and will not much longer be far from his friends and his own country; yet withal I will give thee my oath on it. Zeus be my witness first, of gods the highest and best, and the hearth of noble Odysseus whereunto I am come, that all these things shall surely be accomplished even as I tell thee. In this same year Odysseus shall come hither, as the old moon wanes and the new is born.'

Then wise Penelope answered him: 'Ah! stranger would that this word may be accomplished. Soon shouldst thou be aware of kindness and many a gift at my hands, so that whoso met with thee would call thee blessed. But on this wise my heart has a boding, and so it shall be. Neither shall Odysseus come home any more, nor shalt thou gain an escort hence, since there are not now such masters in the house as Odysseus was among men,—if ever such an one there was,—to welcome guests revered and speed them on their way. But do ye, my handmaids, wash this man's feet and lay a bed for him, mattress and mantles and shining blankets, that well and warmly he may come to the time of golden-throned Dawn. And very early in the morning bathe him and anoint him, that within the house beside Telemachus he may eat meat, sitting quietly in the hall. And it shall be the worse for any hurtful man of the wooers, that vexes the stranger, yea he shall not henceforth profit himself here, for all his sore anger. For how shalt thou learn concerning me, stranger, whether indeed I excel all women in wit and thrifty device, if all unkempt and evil clad thou sittest at supper in my halls? Man's life is brief enough! And if any be a hard man and hard at heart, all men cry evil on him for the time to come, while yet he lives, and all men mock him when he is dead. But if any be a blameless man and blameless of heart, his guests noise his wide fame abroad, and many call him excellent.'

Then Odysseus of many counsels answered her and said: ‘O wife revered of Odysseus, son of Laertes, mantles verily and shining blankets are hateful to me, since first I left behind me the snowy hills of Crete, voyaging in the long-oared galley; nay, I will lie as in time past I was used to rest through the sleepless nights. For full many a night I have lain on an unsightly bed, and awaited the bright throned Dawn. And baths for the feet are no longer my delight, nor shall any women of those who are serving maidens in thy house touch my foot, unless there chance to be some old wife, true of heart, one that has borne as much trouble as myself; I would not grudge such an one to touch my feet.’

Then wise Penelope answered him: ‘Dear stranger, for there has been none ever so discreet as thou, nor dearer, of all the strangers from afar that have come to my house, so clearly thou speakest all things prudently; I have such an ancient woman of an understanding heart, that diligently nursed that hapless man my lord, and cherished him and took him in her arms, in the hour when his mother bare him. She will wash thy feet, albeit she is weak with age. Up now, wise Eurycleia, and wash this man, who is of like age with thy master. Yea and perchance such even now are the feet of Odysseus, and such too his hands, for men quickly age in evil fortune.’

So she spake, and the old woman covered her face with her hands and shed warm tears, and spake a word of lamentation, saying:

‘Ah, woe is me, child, for thy sake, all helpless that I am! Surely Zeus hated thee above all men, though thou hadst a god-fearing spirit! For never yet did any mortal burn so many fat pieces of the thigh and so many choice hecatombs to Zeus, whose joy is in the thunder, as thou didst give to him, with prayers that so thou mightest grow to a smooth old age and rear thy renowned son. But now from thee alone hath Zeus wholly cut off the day of thy returning. Haply at him too did the women mock in a strange land afar, whensoever he came to the famous palace of any lord, even as here these shameless ones all mock at thee. To shun their insults and many taunts it is that thou sufferest them not to wash thy feet, but the daughter of Icarius, wise Penelope, hath bidden me that am right willing to this task. Wherefore I will wash thy feet, both for Penelope's sake and for thine own, for that my heart within me is moved with pity. But come, mark the word that I shall speak. Many strangers travel-worn have ere now come hither, but I say that I have never seen any so like another, as thou art like Odysseus, in fashion in voice and in feet.'

Then Odysseus of many counsels answered her saying: 'Old wife, even so all men declare, that have beheld us twain, that we favour each other exceedingly, even as thou dost mark and say.'

Thereupon the crone took the shining cauldron, which she used for the washing of feet, and poured in much cold water and next mingled therewith the warm. Now Odysseus sat aloof from the hearth, and of a sudden he turned his face to the darkness, for anon he had a misgiving of heart lest when she handled him she might know the scar again, and all should be revealed. Now she drew near her lord to wash him, and straightway she knew the scar of the wound, that the boar had dealt him with his white tusk long ago, when Odysseus went to Parnassus to see Autolycus, and the sons of Autolycus, his mother's noble father, who outdid all men in thievery and skill in swearing. This skill was the gift of the god himself, even Hermes, for that he burned to him the well-pleasing sacrifice of the thighs of lambs and kids; wherefore Hermes abetted him gladly. Now Autolycus once had gone to the rich land of Ithaca, and found his daughter's son a child new-born, and when he was making an end of supper, behold, Eurycleia set the babe on his knees, and spake and hailed him: 'Autolycus find now a name thyself to give thy child's own son; for lo, he is a child of many prayers.'

Then Autolycus made answer and spake: 'My daughter and my daughter's lord, give ye him whatsoever name I tell you. For, behold, I am come hither in great wrath against many a one, both man and woman, over the fruitful earth, wherefore let the child's name be "a man of wrath," Odysseus. But when the child reaches his full growth, and comes to the great house of his mother's kin at Parnassus, whereby are my possessions, I will give him a gift out of these and send him on his way rejoicing.'

Therefore it was that Odysseus went to receive the splendid gifts. And Autolycus and the sons of Autolycus grasped his hands and greeted him with gentle words, and Amphithea, his mother's mother, cast her arms about him and kissed his face and his beautiful eyes. Then Autolycus called to his renowned sons to get ready the meal, and they hearkened to the call. So presently they led in a five-year-old bull, which they flayed and busily prepared, and cut up all the limbs and deftly chopped them small, and pierced them with spits and roasted them cunningly, dividing the messes. So for that livelong day they feasted till the going down of the sun, and their soul lacked not aught of the equal banquet. But when the sun sank and darkness came on then they laid them to rest and took the boon of sleep.

Now so soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, they all went forth to the chase, the hounds and the sons of Autolycus, and with them went the goodly Odysseus. So they fared up the steep hill of wood-clad Parnassus, and quickly they came to the windy hollows. Now the sun was but just striking on the fields, and was come forth from the soft flowing stream of deep Oceanus. Then the beaters reached a glade of the woodland, and before them went the hounds tracking a scent, but behind came the sons of Autolycus, and among them goodly Odysseus followed close on the hounds, swaying a long spear. Thereby in a thick lair was a great boar lying, and through the coppice the force of the wet winds blew never, neither did the bright sun light on it with his rays, nor could the rain pierce through, so thick it was, and of fallen leaves there was great plenty therein. Then the noise of the men's feet and the dogs' came upon the boar, as they pressed on in the chase, and forth from his lair he sprang towards them with his back well bristled and fire shining in his eyes, and stood at bay before them all. Then Odysseus was the first to rush in, holding his spear aloft in his strong hand, most keen to smite; but the boar was too quick for him and struck him above the knee, ripping through much flesh with his tusk as he charged sideways, but he reached not to the bone of the man. Then Odysseus aimed well and smote him on his right shoulder, so that the point of the bright spear went clean through, and the boar fell in the dust with a cry, and his life passed from him. Then the dear sons of Autolycus began to busy them with the carcase, and as for the wound of the noble godlike Odysseus, they bound it up skilfully, and stayed the black blood with a song of healing, and straightway returned to the house of their dear father. Then Autolycus and the sons of Autolycus got him well healed of his wound, and gave him splendid gifts, and quickly sent him with all love to Ithaca, gladly speeding a glad guest. There his father and lady mother were glad of his returning, and asked him of all his adventures, and of his wound how he came by it, and duly he told them all, namely, how the boar gashed him with his white tusk in the chase, when he had gone to Parnassus with the sons of Autolycus.

Now the old woman took the scarred limb and passed her hands down it, and knew it by the touch and let the foot drop suddenly, so that the knee fell into the bath, and the brazen vessel rang, being turned over on the other side, and behold, the water was spilled on the ground. Then grief and joy came on her in one moment, and both her eyes filled up with tears, and the voice of her utterance was stayed, and touching the chin of Odysseus she spake to him, saying:

'Yea verily, thou art Odysseus, my dear child, and I knew thee not before, till I had handled all the body of my lord.'

Therewithal she looked towards Penelope, as minded to make a sign that her husband was now home. But Penelope could not meet her eyes nor take note of her, for Athene had bent her thoughts to other things. But Odysseus feeling for the old woman's throat seized it with his right hand and with the other drew her closer to him and spake saying:

'Woman, why wouldest thou indeed destroy me? It was thou that didst nurse me there at thine own breast, and now after travail and much pain I am come in the twentieth year to mine own country. But since thou art ware of me, and the god has put this in thy heart, be silent, lest another learn the matter in the halls. For on this wise I will declare it, and it shall surely be accomplished:—if the gods subdue the lordly wooers unto me, I will not hold my hand from thee, my nurse though thou art, when I slay the other handmaids in my halls.'

Then wise Eurycleia answered, saying: 'My child, what word hath escaped the door of thy lips? Thou knowest how firm is my spirit and unyielding, and I will keep me close as hard stone or iron. Yet another thing will I tell thee, and do thou ponder it in thine heart. If the gods subdue the lordly wooers to thy hand, then will I tell thee all the tale of the women in the halls, which of them dishonour thee and which be guiltless.'

Then Odysseus of many counsels answered her saying: 'Nurse, wherefore I pray thee wilt thou speak of these? Thou needest not, for even I myself will mark them well and take knowledge of each. Nay, do thou keep thy saying to thyself, and leave the rest to the gods.'

Even so he spake, and the old woman passed forth from the hall to bring water for his feet, for that first water was all spilled. So when she had washed him and anointed him well with olive-oil, Odysseus again drew up his settle nearer to the fire to warm himself, and covered up the scar with his rags. Then the wise Penelope spake first, saying:

'Stranger, there is yet a little thing I will make bold to ask thee, for soon will it be the hour for pleasant rest, for him on whomsoever sweet sleep falls, though he be heavy with care. But to me has the god given sorrow, yea sorrow measureless, for all the day I have my fill of wailing and lamenting, as I look to mine own housewiferies and to the tasks of the maidens in the house. But when night comes and sleep takes hold of all, I lie on my couch, and shrewd cares, thick thronging about my inmost heart, disquiet me in my sorrowing. Even as when the daughter of Pandareus, the brown bright nightingale, sings sweet in the first season of the spring, from her place in the thick leafage of the trees, and with many a turn and trill she pours forth her full-voiced music bewailing her child, dear Itylus, whom on a time she slew with the sword unwitting, Itylus the son of Zethus the prince; even as her song, my troubled soul sways to and fro. Shall I abide with my son, and keep all secure, all the things of my getting, my thralls and great high-roofed home, having respect unto the bed of my lord and the voice of the people, or even now follow with the best of the Achaeans that woos me in the halls, and gives a bride-price beyond reckoning? Now my son, so long as he was a child and light of heart, would not suffer me to marry and leave the house of my husband; but now that he is great of growth, and is come to the full measure of manhood, even now he prays me to go back again from these halls, being vexed for his possessions that the Achaeans devour before his eyes. But come now, hear a dream of mine and tell me the interpretation thereof. Twenty geese I have in the house, that eat wheat out of the water-trough, and it gladdens me to look on them. Now a great eagle of crooked beak came forth from the mountain, and brake all their necks and slew them; and they lay strewn in a heap in the halls, while he was borne aloft to the bright air. Thereon I wept and wailed, in a dream though it was, and around me were gathered the fair-tressed Achaean women as I made piteous lament, for that the eagle had slain my geese. But he came back and sat him down on a jutting point of the roof-beam, and with the voice of a man he spake, and stayed my weeping:

'"Take heart, O daughter of renowned Icarius; this is no dream but a true vision, that shall be accomplished for thee. The geese are the wooers, and I that before was the eagle am now thy husband come again, who will let slip unsightly death upon all the wooers." With that word sweet slumber let me go, and I looked about, and beheld the geese in the court devouring the wheat by the trough, where they had been before.'

Then Odysseus of many counsels answered her and said: 'Lady, none may turn aside the dream to interpret it otherwise, seeing that Odysseus himself is showing thee how he will fulfil it. For the wooers destruction is clearly boded, for all and every one; not a man shall avoid death and the fates.'

Then wise Penelope answered him: 'Stranger, verily dreams are hard, and hard to be discerned; nor are all things therein fulfilled for men. Twain are the gates of shadowy dreams, the one is fashioned of horn and one of ivory. Such dreams as pass through the portals of sawn ivory are deceitful, and bear tidings that are unfulfilled. But the dreams that come forth through the gates of polished horn bring a true issue, whosoever of mortals beholds them. Yet methinks my strange dream came not thence; of a truth that would be most welcome to me and to my son. But another thing will I tell thee, and do thou ponder it in thy heart. Lo, even now draws nigh the morn of evil name, that is to sever me from the house of Odysseus, for now I am about to ordain for a trial those axes that he was wont to set up in his halls, like the stays of oak in ship-building, twelve in all, and he would stand far apart and shoot his arrow through them all. And now I will offer this contest to the wooers: whoso shall most easily string the bow in his hands, and shoot through all twelve axes, with him will I go and forsake this house, this honourable house, so very fair and filled with all livelihood, which methinks I shall yet remember, aye, in a dream.'

Then Odysseus of many counsels answered her and said: 'Wife revered of Odysseus son of Laertes, no longer delay this contest in thy halls; for, lo, Odysseus of many counsels will be here, before these men, for all their handling of the polished bow, shall have strung it, and shot the arrow through the iron.'

Then the wise Penelope answered him: 'Stranger, if only thou wert willing still to sit beside me in the halls and to delight me, not upon my eyelids would sleep be shed. But men may in no wise abide sleepless ever, for the immortals have made a time for all things for mortals on the earth, the graingiver. Howbeit I will go aloft to my upper chamber and lay me on my bed, the place of my groanings, that is ever watered by my tears, since the day that Odysseus went to see that evil Ilios, never to be named. There will I lay me down, but do thou lie in this house; either strew thee somewhat on the floor, or let them lay bedding for thee.'

Therewith she ascended to her shining upper chamber, not alone, for with her likewise went her handmaids. So she went aloft to her upper chamber with the women her handmaids, and there was bewailing Odysseus, her dear lord, till grey-eyed Athene cast sweet sleep upon her eyelids.

BOOK XX

Pallas and Odysseus consult of the killing of the wooers.

Now the goodly Odysseus laid him down to sleep in the outer gallery of the house. He spread an undressed bull's hide on the ground and above it many fleeces of sheep, that the Achaeans were wont to slay in sacrifice, and Eurynome threw a mantle over him where he lay. There Odysseus lay wakeful, with evil thoughts against the wooers in his heart, and the women they came forth from the house, that aforetime were wont to lie with the wooers, making laughter and mirth among themselves. Then the heart of Odysseus was stirred within his breast, and much he communed with his mind and soul, whether he should leap forth upon them and deal death to each, or suffer them to lie with the proud wooers, now for the last and latest time. And his heart growled sullenly within him. And even as a bitch paces round her tender whelps growling, when she spies a man she knows not, and she is eager to assail him, so growled his heart within him in his wrath at their evil deeds. Then he smote upon his breast and rebuked his own heart, saying:

'Endure, my heart; yea, a baser thing thou once didst bear, on that day when the Cyclops, unrestrained in fury, devoured the mighty men of my company; but still thou didst endure till thy craft found a way for thee forth from out the cave, where thou thoughtest to die.'

So spake he, chiding his own spirit within him, and his heart verily abode steadfast in obedience to his word. But Odysseus himself lay tossing this way and that. And as when a man by a great fire burning takes a paunch full of fat and blood, and turns it this way and that and longs to have it roasted most speedily, so Odysseus tossed from side to side, musing how he might stretch forth his hands upon the shameless wooers, being one man against so many. Then down from heaven came Athene and drew nigh him, fashioned in the likeness of a woman. And she stood over his head and spake to him, saying:

'Lo now again, wherefore art thou watching, most luckless of all men living? Is not this thy house and is not thy wife there within and thy child, such a son as men wish to have for their own?'

Then Odysseus of many counsels answered her saying: 'Yea, goddess, all this thou hast spoken as is meet. But my heart within me muses in some measure upon this, how I may stretch forth my hands upon the shameless wooers, being but one man, while they abide ever in their companies within. Moreover this other and harder matter I ponder in my heart: even if I were to slay them by thy will and the will of Zeus, whither should I flee from the avengers? Look well to this, I pray thee.'

Then answered the goddess, grey-eyed Athene: 'O hard of belief! yea, many there be that trust even in a weaker friend than I am, in one that is a mortal and knows not such craft as mine; but I am a god, that preserve thee to the end, in all manner of toils. And now I will tell thee plainly; even should fifty companies of mortal men compass us about eager to slay us in battle, even their kine shouldst thou drive off and their brave flocks. But let sleep in turn come over thee; to wake and to watch all night, this too is vexation of spirit; and soon shalt thou rise from out of thy troubles.'

So she spake and poured slumber upon his eyelids, but for her part the fair goddess went back to Olympus.

While sleep laid hold of him loosening the cares of his soul, sleep that loosens the limbs of men, his good wife awoke and wept as she sat on her soft bed. But when she had taken her fill of weeping, to Artemis first the fair lady made her prayer:

'Artemis, lady and goddess, daughter of Zeus, would that even now thou wouldst plant thy shaft within my breast and take my life away, even in this hour! Or again, would that the stormwind might snatch me up, and bear me hence down the dusky ways, and cast me forth where the back-flowing Oceanus mingles with the sea. It should be even as when the stormwinds bare away the daughters of Pandareus. Their father and their mother the gods had slain, and the maidens were left orphans in the halls, and fair Aphrodite cherished them with curds and sweet honey and delicious wine. And Here gave them beauty and wisdom beyond the lot of women, and holy Artemis dowered them with stature, and Athene taught them skill in all famous handiwork. Now while fair Aphrodite was wending to high Olympus, to pray that a glad marriage might be accomplished for the maidens,—and to Zeus she went whose joy is in the thunder, for he knows all things well, what the fates give and deny to mortal men—in the meanwhile the spirits of the storm snatched away these maidens, and gave them to be handmaids to the hateful Erinyes. Would that in such wise they that hold the mansions of Olympus would take me from the sight of men, or that fair-tressed Artemis would strike me, that so with a vision of Odysseus before mine eyes I might even pass beneath the dreadful earth, nor ever make a baser man's delight! But herein is an evil that will be borne, namely, when a man weeps all the day long in great sorrow of heart, but sleep takes him in the night, for sleep makes him forgetful of all things, of good and evil, when once it has overshadowed his eyelids. But as for me, even the dreams that the gods send upon me are evil. For furthermore, this very night one seemed to lie by my side, in the likeness of my lord, as he was when he went with the host, and then was my heart glad, since methought it was no vain dream but a clear vision at the last.'

So she spake, and anon came the golden throned Dawn. Now goodly Odysseus caught the voice of her weeping, and then he fell a musing, and it seemed to him that even now she knew him and was standing by his head. So he took up the mantle and the fleeces whereon he was lying, and set them on a high seat in the hall, and bare out the bull's hide out of doors and laid it there, and lifting up his hands he prayed to Zeus:

'Father Zeus, if ye gods of your good will have led me over wet and dry, to mine own country, after ye had plagued me sore, let some one I pray of the folk that are waking show me a word of good omen within, and without let some other sign be revealed to me from Zeus.'

So he spake in prayer, and Zeus, the counsellor, heard him.

Straightway he thundered from shining Olympus, from on high from the place of clouds; and goodly Odysseus was glad. Moreover a woman, a grinder at the mill, uttered a voice of omen from within the house hard by, where stood the mills of the shepherd of the people. At these handmills twelve women in all were wont to bestir themselves, making meal of barley and of wheat, the marrow of men. Now all the others were asleep, for they had ground out their task of grain, but this one alone rested not yet, being the weakest of all. She now stayed her quern and spake a word, a sign to her lord:

'Father Zeus, who rulest over gods and men, loudly hast thou thundered from the starry sky, yet nowhere is there a cloud to be seen: this surely is a portent thou art showing to some mortal. Fulfil now, I pray thee, even to miserable me, the word that I shall speak. May the wooers, on this day, for the last and latest time make their sweet feasting in the halls of Odysseus! They that have loosened my knees with cruel toil to grind their barley meal, may they now sup their last!'

Thus she spake, and goodly Odysseus was glad in the omen of the voice and in the thunder of Zeus; for he thought that he had gotten his vengeance on the guilty.

Now the other maidens in the fair halls of Odysseus had gathered, and were kindling on the hearth the never-resting fire. And Telemachus rose from his bed, a godlike man and put on his raiment, and slung a sharp sword about his shoulders, and beneath his shining feet he bound his goodly sandals. And he caught up his mighty spear shod with sharp bronze, and went and stood by the threshold, and spake to Eurycleia:

'Dear nurse, have ye honoured our guest in the house with food and couch, or does he lie uncared for, as he may? For this is my mother's way, wise as she is: blindly she honours one of mortal men, even the worse, but the better she sends without honour away.'

Then the prudent Eurycleia answered: 'Nay, my child, thou shouldst not now blame her where no blame is. For the stranger sat and drank wine, so long as he would, and of food he said he was no longer fain, for thy mother asked him. Moreover, against the hour when he should bethink him of rest and sleep, she bade the maidens strew for him a bed. But he, as one utterly wretched and ill-fated, refused to lie on a couch and under blankets, but on an undressed hide and on the fleeces of sheep he slept in the outer gallery, and we cast a mantle over him.'

So she spake, and Telemachus passed out through the hall with his lance in his hand, and two fleet dogs bare him company. He went on his way to the assembly-place to join the goodly-greaved Achaeans. But the good lady Eurycleia, daughter of Ops son of Peisenor, called aloud to her maidens:

'Come hither, let some of you go busily and sweep the hall, and sprinkle it, and on the fair-fashioned seats throw purple coverlets, and others with sponges wipe all the tables clean, and cleanse the mixing bowls and well-wrought double beakers, and others again go for water to the well, and return with it right speedily. For the wooers will not long be out of the hall but will return very early, for it is a feast day, yea for all the people.'

So she spake, and they all gave ready ear and hearkened. Twenty of them went to the well of dark water, and the others there in the halls were busy with skilful hands.

Then in came the serving-men of the Achaeans. Thereon they cleft the faggots well and cunningly, while, behold, the women came back from the well. Then the swineherd joined them leading three fatted boars, the best in all the flock. These he left to feed at large in the fair courts, but as for him he spake to Odysseus gently, saying:

'Tell me, stranger, do the Achaeans at all look on thee with more regard, or do they dishonour thee in the halls, as heretofore?'

Then Odysseus of many counsels answered him saying:

'Oh, that the gods, Eumaeus, may avenge the scorn wherewith these men deal insolently, and devise infatuate deeds in another's house, and know no touch of shame!'

On such wise they spake one to another. And Melanthius drew near them, the goatherd, leading the goats that were most excellent in all the herds to be a dinner for the wooers, and two shepherds bare him company. So he tethered the goats beneath the echoing corridor, and himself spake to Odysseus and taunted him, saying:

'Stranger, wilt thou still be a plague to us here in the hall, with thy begging of men, and wilt not get thee gone? In no wise do I think we twain will be sundered, till we taste each the other's fists, for thy begging is out of all order. Also there are elsewhere other feasts of the Achaeans.'

So he spake, but Odysseus of many counsels answered him not a word, but in silence he shook his head, brooding evil in the deep of his heart.

Moreover a third man came up, Philoetius, a master of men, leading a barren heifer for the wooers and fatted goats. Now ferrymen had brought them over from the mainland, boatmen who send even other folks on their way, whosoever comes to them. The cattle he tethered carefully beneath the echoing corridor, and himself drew close to the swineherd and began to question him:

'Swineherd, who is this stranger but newly come to our house? From what men does he claim his birth? Where are his kin and his native fields? Hapless is he, yet in fashion he is like a royal lord; but the gods mar the goodliness of wandering men, when even for kings they have woven the web of trouble.'

So he spake, and came close to him offering his right hand in welcome, and uttering his voice spake to him winged words:

'Father and stranger, hail! may happiness be thine in the time to come; but as now, thou art fast holden in many sorrows! Father Zeus, none other god is more baneful than thou; thou hast no compassion on men that are of thine own begetting, but makest them to have fellowship with evil and with bitter pains. The sweat brake out on me when I beheld him, and mine eyes stand full of tears for memory of Odysseus, for he too, methinks, is clad in such vile raiment as this, and is wandering among men, if haply he yet lives and see the sunlight. But if he be dead already and in the house of Hades, then woe is me for the noble Odysseus, who set me over his cattle while I was but a lad in the land of the Cephallenians. And now these wax numberless; in no better wise could the breed of broad-browed cattle of any mortal increase, even as the ears of corn. But strangers command me to be ever driving these for themselves to devour, and they care nothing for the heir in the house, nor tremble at the vengeance of the gods, for they are eager even now to divide among themselves the possessions of our lord who is long afar. Now my heart within my breast often revolves this thing. Truly it were an evil deed, while a son of the master is yet alive, to get me away to the land of strangers, and go off, with cattle and all, to alien men. But this is more grievous still, to abide here in affliction watching over the herds of other men. Yea, long ago I would have fled and gone forth to some other of the proud kings, for things are now past sufferance; but still my thought is of that hapless one, if he might come I know not whence, and make a scattering of the wooers in the halls.'

Then Odysseus of many counsels answered him saying:

'Neatherd, seeing thou art not like to an evil man or a foolish, and of myself I mark how that thou hast gotten understanding of heart, therefore I will tell thee somewhat, and swear a great oath to confirm it. Be Zeus now my witness before any god, and the hospitable board and the hearth of noble Odysseus, whereunto I am come, that while thou art still in this place Odysseus shall come home, and thou shalt see with thine eyes, if thou wilt, the slaying of the wooers who lord it here.'

Then the neatherd made answer, saying:

'Ah, would, stranger, that Cronion may accomplish this word! So shouldst thou know what my might is, and how my hands follow to obey.'

In like manner Eumaeus prayed to all the gods, that wise Odysseus might return to his own home.

On such wise they spake one to the other, but the wooers at that time were framing death and doom for Telemachus. Even so there came by them a bird on their left, an eagle of lofty flight, with a cowering dove in his clutch. Then Amphinomus made harangue and spake among them:

'Friends, this counsel of ours will not go well, namely, the slaying of Telemachus; rather let us bethink us of the feast.'

So spake Amphinomus, and his saying pleased them well. They passed into the halls of godlike Odysseus and laid by their mantles on the chairs and high seats, and sacrificed great sheep and stout goats and the fatlings of the boars and the heifer of the herd; then they roasted the entrails and served them round and mixed wine in the bowl, and the swineherd set a cup by each man. And Philoetius, a master of men, handed them wheaten bread in beautiful baskets, and Melanthius poured out the wine. So they put forth their hands on the good cheer set before them.

Now Telemachus, in his crafty purpose, made Odysseus to sit down within the stablished hall by the threshold of stone, and placed for him a mean settle and a little table. He set by him his mess of the entrails, and poured wine into a golden cup and spake to him, saying:

'There, sit thee down, drinking thy wine among the lords, and the taunts and buffets of all the wooers I myself will ward off from thee, for this is no house of public resort, but the very house of Odysseus, and for me he won it. But, ye wooers, refrain your minds from rebukes and your hands from buffets, that no strife and feud may arise.'

So he said, and they all bit their lips and marvelled at Telemachus, in that he spake boldly. Then Antinous, son of Eupeithes, spake among them, saying:

'Hard though the word be, let us accept it, Achaeans, even the word of Telemachus, though mightily he threatens us in his speech. For Zeus Cronion hath hindered us of our purpose, else would we have silenced him in our halls, shrill orator as he is.'

So spake Antinous, but Telemachus took no heed of his words. Now the henchmen were leading through the town the holy hecatomb of the gods, and lo, the long-haired Achaeans were gathered beneath the shady grove of Apollo, the prince of archery.

Now when they had roasted the outer flesh and drawn it off the spits, they divided the messes and shared the glorious feast. And beside Odysseus they that waited set an equal share, the same as that which fell to themselves, for so Telemachus commanded, the dear son of divine Odysseus.

Now Athene would in nowise suffer the lordly wooers to abstain from biting scorn, that the pain might sink yet the deeper into the heart of Odysseus, son of Laertes. There was among the wooers a man of a lawless heart, Ctesippus was his name, and in Same was his home, who trusting, forsooth, to his vast possessions, was wooing the wife of Odysseus the lord long afar. And now he spake among the proud wooers:

'Hear me, ye lordly wooers, and I will say somewhat. The stranger verily has long had his due portion, as is meet, an equal share; for it is not fair nor just to rob the guests of Telemachus of their right, whosoever they may be that come to this house. Go to then, I also will bestow on him a stranger's gift, that he in turn may give a present either to the bath-woman, or to any other of the thralls within the house of godlike Odysseus.'

Therewith he caught up an ox's foot from the dish, where it lay, and hurled it with strong hand. But Odysseus lightly avoided it with a turn of his head, and smiled right grimly in his heart, and the ox's foot smote the well-builded wall. Then Telemachus rebuked Ctesippus, saying:

'Verily, Ctesippus, it has turned out happier for thy heart's pleasure as it is! Thou didst not smite the stranger, for he himself avoided that which was cast at him, else surely would I have struck thee through the midst with the sharp spear, and in place of wedding banquet thy father would have had to busy him about a funeral feast in this place. Wherefore let no man make show of unseemly deeds in this my house, for now I have understanding to discern both good and evil, but in time past I was yet a child. But as needs we must, we still endure to see these deeds, while sheep are slaughtered and wine drunken and bread devoured, for hard it is for one man to restrain many. But come, no longer work me harm out of an evil heart; but if ye be set on slaying me, even me, with the sword, even that would I rather endure, and far better would it be to die than to witness forever these unseemly deeds—strangers shamefully entreated, and men haling the handmaidens in foul wise through the fair house.'

So he spake, and they were all hushed in silence. And late and at last spake among them Agelaus, son of Damastor:

'Friends, when a righteous word has been spoken, none surely would rebuke another with hard speech and be angry.

Misuse ye not this stranger, nor any of the thralls that are in the house of godlike Odysseus. But to Telemachus himself I would speak a soft word and to his mother, if perchance it may find favour with the mind of those twain. So long as your hearts within you had hope of the wise Odysseus returning to his own house, so long none could be wroth that ye waited and held back the wooers in the halls, for better had it been if Odysseus had returned and come back to his own home. But now the event is plain, that he will return no more. Go then, sit by thy mother and tell her all, namely, that she must wed the best man that woos her, and whoso gives most gifts; so shalt thou with gladness live on the heritage of thy father, eating and drinking, while she cares for another's house.'

Then wise Telemachus answered, and said: 'Nay by Zeus, Agelaus, and by the griefs of my father, who far away methinks from Ithaca has perished or goes wandering, in nowise do I delay my mother's marriage; nay, I bid her be married to what man she will, and withal I offer gifts without number. But I do indeed feel shame to drive her forth from the hall, despite her will, by a word of compulsion; God forbid that ever this should be.'

So spake Telemachus, but among the wooers Pallas Athene roused laughter unquenchable, and drave their wits wandering. And now they were laughing with alien lips, and blood-bedabbled was the flesh they ate, and their eyes were filled with tears and their soul was fain of lamentation. Then the godlike Theoclymenus spake among them:

'Ah, wretched men, what woe is this ye suffer? Shrouded in night are your heads and your faces and your knees, and kindled is the voice of wailing, and all cheeks are wet with tears, and the walls and the fair spaces between the pillars are sprinkled with blood[1]. And the porch is full, and full is the court, of ghosts that hasten hellwards beneath the gloom, and the sun has perished out of heaven, and an evil mist has overspread the world.'

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[1] The omens seen by the second-sighted Theoclymenus, a man who inherits with the blood of Melampus the gift of soothsaying, are those which everywhere bode death and doom. The shroud of mist covering not only the feet and knees, the sign of approaching but distant death, but reaching to the head so as to foreshow that death is even at the doors is familiar to readers of Martin's book on the Western Isles of Scotland. The dripping of blood from the walls is illus-

So spake he, and they all laughed sweetly at him. Then Eurymachus, son of Polybus, began to speak to them, saying:

'The guest that is newly come from a strange land is beside himself. Quick, ye young men, and convey him forth out of doors, that he may go to the place of the gathering, since here he finds it dark as night.'

Then godlike Theoclymenus answered him: 'Eurymachus, in nowise do I seek guides of thee to send me on my way. Eyes have I, and ears, and both my feet, and a stable mind in my breast of no mean fashioning. With these I will go forth, for I see evil coming on you, which not one man of the wooers may avoid or shun, of all you who in the house of divine Odysseus deal insolently with men and devise infatuate deeds.'

Therewith he went forth from out the fair-lying halls, and came to Peiraeus who received him gladly. Then all the wooers, looking one at the other, provoked Telemachus to anger, laughing at his guests. And thus some one of the haughty youths would speak:

'Telemachus, no man is more luckless than thou in his guests, seeing thou keepest such a filthy wanderer, whosoever he be, always longing for bread and wine, and skilled in no peaceful work nor any deed of war, but a mere burden of the earth. And this other fellow again must stand up to play the seer! Nay, but if thou wouldest listen to me, much better it were. Let us cast these strangers on board a benched ship, and send them to the Sicilians, whence they would fetch thee their price.'

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trated by the visions of Bergthora, and Njal, on the night of the slaughter of their family. *Story of Burnt Njal,* ii. 167—

'That same evening Bergthora spake to her household and said, "Now shall ye choose your meat to-night so that each may have what he likes best, for this evening is the last that I shall set meat before my houshold." . . . 'After that she set meat on the board, and Njal said, "Wondrously now it seems to me. Methinks I see all round the room, and it seems as though the gable wall were thrown down, but the whole board and the meat on it is one gore of blood."'

So spake the wooers, but he heeded not their words; in silence he looked towards his father, expecting evermore the hour when he should stretch forth his hands upon the shameless wooers.

Now the daughter of Icarius, wise Penelope, had set her fair chair over against them, and heard the words of each one of the men in the halls. For in the midst of laughter they had got ready the midday meal, a sweet meal and abundant, for they had sacrificed many cattle. But never could there be a banquet less gracious than that supper, such an one as the goddess and the brave man were soon to spread for them; for that they had begun the devices of shame.

BOOK XXI

Penelope bringeth forth her husband's bow, which the suitors could not bend, but was bent by Odysseus.

Now the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, put it into the heart of the daughter of Icarius wise Penelope, to set the bow and the axes of grey iron, for the wooers in the halls of Odysseus, to be the weapons of the contest, and the beginning of death. So she climbed the tall staircase of her chamber, and took the well-bent key in her strong hand, a goodly key of bronze, whereon was a handle of ivory. And she betook her, with her handmaidens, to the treasure-chamber in the uttermost part of the house, where lay the treasures of her lord, bronze and gold and well-wrought iron. And there lay the back-bent bow and the quiver for the arrows, and many shafts were therein, winged for death, gifts of a friend of Odysseus, that met with him in Lacedaemon, Iphitus son of Eurytus, a man like to the gods. These twain fell in with one another in Messene, in the house of wise Ortilochus. Now Odysseus had gone thither to recover somewhat that was owing to him from all the people, for the men of Messene had lifted three hundred sheep in benched ships from out of Ithaca, with the shepherds of the flock. In quest of these it was that Odysseus went on a far embassy, being yet a lad; for his father and the other elders sent him forth. Moreover, Iphitus came thither in his search for twelve brood mares, which he had lost, with sturdy mules at the teat. These same it was that brought him death and destiny in the latter end, when he came to the child of Zeus, hardy of heart, the man Heracles, that had knowledge of great adventures, who smote Iphitus though his guest in his house, in his frowardness, and had no regard for the vengeance of the gods, nor for the table which he spread before him. Now after the meal he slew him, his guest though he was, and kept for himself in the halls the horses strong of hoof. After these was Iphitus asking, when he met with Odysseus, and he gave him the bow, which of old great Eurytus bare and had left at his death to his son in his lofty house. And Odysseus gave Iphitus a sharp sword and a mighty spear, for the beginning of a loving friendship; but never had they acquaintance one of another at the board; ere that might be, the son of Zeus slew Iphitus son of Eurytus, a man like to the immortals, the same that gave Odysseus the bow. But goodly Odysseus would never take it with him on the black ships, as he went to the wars, but the bow was laid by at home in the halls as a memorial of a dear guest, and he carried it on his own land.

Now when the fair lady had come even to the treasure-chamber, and had stept upon the threshold of oak, which the carpenter had on a time planed cunningly, and over it had made straight the line,—doorposts also had he fitted thereby, whereon he set shining doors,—anon she quickly loosed the strap from the handle of the door, and thrust in the key, and with a straight aim shot back the bolts. And even as a bull roars that is grazing in a meadow, so mightily roared the fair doors smitten by the key; and speedily they flew open before her. Then she stept on to the high floor, where the coffers stood, wherein the fragrant raiment was stored. Thence she stretched forth her hand, and took the bow from off the pin, all in the bright case which sheathed it around. And there she sat down, and set the case upon her knees, and cried aloud and wept, and took out the bow of her lord. Now when she had her fill of tearful lament, she set forth to go to the hall to the company of the proud wooers, with the back-bent bow in her hands, and the quiver for the arrows, and many shafts were therein winged for death. And her maidens along with her bare a chest, wherein lay much store of iron and bronze, the gear of combat of their lord. Now when the fair lady had come unto the wooers, she stood by the doorpost of the well-builded roof, holding up her glistening tire before her face; and a faithful maiden stood on either side of her, and straightway she spake out among the wooers and declared her word, saying:

'Hear me, ye lordly wooers, that have vexed this house, that ye might eat and drink here evermore, forasmuch as the master is long gone, nor could ye find any other mark for your speech, but all your desire was to wed me and take me to wife. Nay come now, ye wooers, seeing that this is the prize that is put before you. I will set forth for you the great bow of divine Odysseus, and whoso shall most easily string the bow in his hands, and shoot through all twelve axes, with him will I go and forsake this house, this honourable house, so very fair and filled with all livelihood, which methinks I shall yet remember, aye, in a dream.'

So spake she, and commanded Eumaeus, the goodly swineherd, to set the bow for the wooers and the axes of grey iron. And Eumaeus took them with tears, and laid them down; and otherwhere the neatherd wept, when he beheld the bow of his lord. Then Antinous rebuked them, and spake and hailed them:

'Foolish boors, whose thoughts look not beyond the day, ah, wretched pair, wherefore now do ye shed tears, and stir the soul of the lady within her, when her heart already lies low in pain, for that she has lost her dear lord? Nay sit, and feast in silence, or else get ye forth and weep, and leave the bow here behind, to be a terrible contest for the wooers, for methinks that this polished bow does not lightly yield itself to be strung. For there is no man among all these present such as Odysseus was, and I myself saw him, yea I remember it well, though I was still but a child.'

So spake he, but his heart within him hoped that he would string the bow, and shoot through the iron. Yet verily, he was to be the first that should taste the arrow at the hands of the noble Odysseus, whom but late he was dishonouring as he sat in the halls, and was inciting all his fellows to do likewise.

Then the mighty prince Telemachus spake among them, saying: 'Lo now, in very truth, Cronion has robbed me of my wits! My dear mother, wise as she is, declares that she will go with a stranger and forsake this house; yet I laugh and in my silly heart I am glad. Nay come now, ye wooers, seeing that this is the prize that is set before you, a lady, the like of whom there is not now in the Achaean land, neither in sacred Pylos, nor in Argos, nor in Mycenae, nor yet in Ithaca, nor in the dark mainland. Nay but ye know all this yourselves,—why need I praise my mother? Come therefore, delay not the issue with excuses, nor hold much longer aloof from the drawing of the bow, that we may see the thing that is to be. Yea and I myself would make trial of this bow. If I shall string it, and shoot through the iron, my lady mother will not quit these halls to my grief, and go with a stranger while I am left behind, being now well able to lift my father's goodly gear of combat.'

Therewith he cast from off his neck his cloak of scarlet, and sprang to his full height, and put away the sword from his shoulders. First he dug a good trench and set up the axes, one long trench for them all, and over it he made straight the line and round about stamped in the earth. And amazement fell on all that beheld how orderly he set the axes, though never before had he seen it so. Then he went and stood by the threshold and began to prove the bow. Thrice he made it to tremble in his great desire to draw it, and thrice he rested from his effort, though still he hoped in his heart to string the bow, and shoot through the iron. And now at last he might have strung it, mightily straining thereat for the fourth time, but Odysseus nodded frowning and stayed him, for all his eagerness. Then the strong prince Telemachus spake among them again:

'Lo you now, even to the end of my days I shall be a coward and a weakling, or it may be I am too young, and have as yet no trust in my hands to defend me from such an one as is angry with me without a cause. But come now, ye who are mightier men than I, essay the bow and let us make an end of the contest.'

Therewith he put the bow from him on the ground, leaning it against the smooth and well-compacted doors, and the swift shaft he propped hard by against the fair bow-tip, and then he sat down once more on the high seat, whence he had risen.

Then Antinous, son of Eupeithes, spake among them, saying: 'Rise up in order, all my friends, beginning from the left, even from the place whence the wine is poured.'

So spake Antinous, and the saying pleased them well. Then first stood up Leiodes, son of Oenops, who was their soothsayer and ever sat by the fair mixing bowl at the extremity of the hall; he alone hated their infatuate deeds and was indignant with all the wooers. He now first took the bow and the swift shaft, and he went and stood by the threshold, and began to prove the bow; but he could not bend it; or ever that might be, his hands grew weary with the straining, his unworn, delicate hands; so he spake among the wooers, saying:

'Friends, of a truth I cannot bend it, let some other take it. Ah, many of our bravest shall this bow rob of spirit and of life, since truly it is far better for us to die, than to live on and to fail of that for which we assemble evermore in this place, day by day expecting the prize. Many there be even now that hope in their hearts and desire to wed Penelope, the bedfellow of Odysseus; but when such an one shall make trial of the bow and see the issue, thereafter let him woo some other fair-robed Achaean woman with his bridal gifts and seek to win her. So may our lady wed the man that gives most gifts, and comes as the chosen of fate.'

So he spake, and put from him the bow leaning it against the smooth and well-compacted doors, and the swift shaft he propped hard by against the fair bow-tip, and then he sat down once more on the high seat, whence he had risen.

But Antinous rebuked him, and spake and hailed him: 'Leiodes, what word hath escaped the door of thy lips; a hard word, and a grievous? Nay, it angers me to hear it, and to think that a bow such as this shall rob our bravest of spirit and of life, and all because thou canst not draw it. For I tell thee that thy lady mother bare thee not of such might as to draw a bow and shoot arrows: but there be others of the proud wooers that shall draw it soon.'

So he spake, and commanded Melanthius, the goatherd, saying: 'Up now, light a fire in the halls, Melanthius; and place a great settle by the fire and a fleece thereon, and bring forth a great ball of lard that is within, that we young men may warm and anoint the bow therewith and prove it, and make an end of the contest.'

So he spake, and Melanthius soon rekindled the never-resting fire, and drew up a settle and placed it near, and put a fleece thereon, and he brought forth a great ball of lard that was within. Therewith the young men warmed the bow, and made essay, but could not string it, for they were greatly lacking of such might. But Antinous still abode in his place and godlike Eurymachus, chief men among the wooers, who were far the most excellent of all.

Now those other twain had gone forth both together from the house, the neatherd and the swineherd of godlike Odysseus; and Odysseus went forth after them. But when they had now passed without the gates and the courtyard, he uttered his voice and spake to them in gentle words:

'Neatherd and thou swineherd, shall I say somewhat or keep it to myself? Nay, my spirit bids me declare it. What manner of men would ye be to help Odysseus, if he should come thus suddenly, I know not whence, and some god were to bring him? Would ye stand on the side of the wooers or of Odysseus? Tell me even as your heart and spirit bid you.'

Then the neatherd answered him, saying: 'Father Zeus, if but thou wouldst fulfil this wish:—oh, that that man might come, and some god lead him hither! So shouldest thou know what my might is, and how my hands follow to obey.'

In like manner Eumaeus prayed to all the gods that wise Odysseus might return to his own home.

Now when he knew for a surety what spirit they were of, once more he answered and spake to them, saying:

'Behold, home am I come, even I; after much travail and sore am I come in the twentieth year to mine own country. And I know how that my coming is desired by you alone of all my thralls, for from none besides have I heard a prayer that I might return once more to my home. And now I will tell you all the truth, even as it shall come to pass. If the god shall subdue the proud wooers to my hands, I will bring you each one a wife, and will give you a heritage of your own and a house builded near to me, and ye twain shall be thereafter in mine eyes as the brethren and companions of Telemachus. But behold, I will likewise show you a most manifest token, that ye may know me well and be certified in heart, even the wound that the boar dealt me with his white tusk long ago, when I went to Parnassus with the sons of Autolycus.'

Therewith he drew aside the rags from the great scar. And when the twain had beheld it and marked it well, they cast their arms about the wise Odysseus, and fell a weeping; and kissed him lovingly on head and shoulders. And in like manner Odysseus too kissed their heads and hands. And now would the sunlight have gone down upon their sorrowing, had not Odysseus himself stayed them saying:

'Cease ye from weeping and lamentation, lest some one come forth from the hall and see us, and tell it likewise in the house. Nay, go ye within one by one and not both together, I first and you following, and let this be the token between us. All the rest, as many as are proud wooers, will not suffer that I should be given the bow and quiver; do thou then, goodly Eumaeus, as thou bearest the bow through the hall, set it in my hands and speak to the women that they bar the well-fitting doors of their chamber. And if any of them hear the sound of groaning or the din of men within our walls, let them not run forth but abide where they are in silence at their work. But on thee. goodly Philoetius, I lay this charge, to bolt and bar the outer gate of the court and swiftly to tie the knot.'

Therewith he passed within the fair-lying halls, and went and sat upon the settle whence he had risen. And likewise the two thralls of divine Odysseus went within.

And now Eurymachus was handling the bow, warming it on this side and on that at the light of the fire; yet even so he could not string it, and in his great heart he groaned mightily; and in heaviness of spirit he spake and called aloud, saying:

'Lo you now, truly am I grieved for myself and for you all! Not for the marriage do I mourn so greatly, afflicted though I be; there are many Achaean women besides, some in sea-begirt Ithaca itself and some in other cities. Nay, but I grieve, if indeed we are so far worse than godlike Odysseus in might, seeing that we cannot bend the bow. It will be a shame even for men unborn to hear thereof.'

Then Antinous, son of Eupeithes, answered him: 'Eurymachus, this shall not be so, and thou thyself too knowest it. For to-day the feast of the archer god is held in the land, a holy feast. Who at such a time would be bending bows? Nay, set it quietly by; what and if we should let the axes all stand as they are? None methinks will come to the hall of Odysseus, son of Laertes, and carry them away. Go to now, let the wine-bearer pour for libation into each cup in turn, that after the drink-offering we may set down the curved bow. And in the morning bid Melanthius, the goatherd, to lead hither the very best goats in all his herds, that we may lay pieces of the thighs on the altar of Apollo the archer, and assay the bow and make an end of the contest.'

So spake Antinous, and the saying pleased them well. Then the henchmen poured water on their hands, and pages crowned the mixing-bowls with drink, and served out the wine to all, when they had poured for libation into each cup in turn. But when they had poured forth and had drunken to their hearts' desire, Odysseus of many counsels spake among them out of a crafty heart, saying:

'Hear me, ye wooers of the renowned queen, that I may say that which my heart within me bids. And mainly to Eurymachus I make my prayer and to the godlike Antinous, forasmuch as he has spoken even this word aright, namely, that for this present ye cease from your archery and leave the issue to the gods; and in the morning the god will give the victory to whomsoever he will. Come therefore, give me the polished bow, that in your presence I may prove my hands and strength, whether I have yet any force such as once was in my supple limbs, or whether my wanderings and needy fare have even now destroyed it.'

So spake he and they all were exceeding wroth, for fear lest he should string the polished bow. And Antinous rebuked him, and spake and hailed him:

'Wretched stranger, thou hast no wit, nay never so little. Art thou not content to feast at ease in our high company, and to lack not thy share of the banquet, but to listen to our speech and our discourse, while no guest and beggar beside thee hears our speech? Wine it is that wounds thee, honey-sweet wine, that is the bane of others too, even of all who take great draughts and drink out of measure. Wine it was that darkened the mind even of the Centaur, renowned Eurytion, in the hall of high-hearted Peirithous, when he went to the Lapithae; and after that his heart was darkened with wine, he wrought foul deeds in his frenzy, in the house of Peirithous. Then wrath fell on all the heroes, and they leaped up and dragged him forth through the porch, when they had shorn off his ears and nostrils with the pitiless sword, and then with darkened mind he bare about with him the burden of his sin in foolishness of heart. Thence was the feud begun between the Centaurs and mankind; but first for himself gat he hurt, being heavy with wine. And even so I declare great mischief unto thee if thou shalt string the bow, for thou shalt find no kindness at the hand of anyone in our land, and anon we will send thee in a black ship to Echetus, the maimer of all men, and thence thou shalt not be saved alive. Nay then, drink at thine ease, and strive not still with men that are younger than thou.'

Then wise Penelope answered him: 'Antinous, truly it is not fair nor just to rob the guests of Telemachus of their due, whosoever he may be that comes to this house. Dost thou think if yonder stranger strings the great bow of Odysseus, in the pride of his might and of his strength of arm, that he will lead me to his home and make me his wife? Nay he himself, methinks, has no such hope in his breast; so, as for that, let not any of you fret himself while feasting in this place; that were indeed unmeet.'

Then Eurymachus, son of Polybus, answered her, saying:

'Daughter of Icarius, wise Penelope, it is not that we deem that he will lead thee to his home,—far be such a thought from us,—but we dread the speech of men and women, lest some day one of the baser sort among the Achaeans say: "Truly men far too mean are wooing the wife of one that is noble, nor can they string the polished bow. But a stranger and a beggar came in his wanderings, and lightly strung the bow, and shot through the iron." Thus will they speak, and these things will turn to our reproach.'

Then wise Penelope answered him: 'Eurymachus, never can there be fair fame in the land for those that devour and dishonour the house of a prince. Why then do ye count such speech as a reproach? But, behold, our guest is great of growth and well-knit, and claims to be born the son of a good father. Come then, give ye him the polished bow, that we may see that which is to be. For thus will I declare my saying, and it shall surely come to pass. If he shall string the bow and Apollo grant him renown, I will clothe him in a mantle and a doublet, goodly raiment, and I will give him a sharp javelin to defend him against dogs and men, and a two-edged sword and sandals to bind beneath his feet, and I will send him whithersoever his heart and spirit bid him go.'

Then wise Telemachus answered her, saying: 'My mother, as for the bow, no Achaean is mightier than I to give or to deny it to whomso I will, neither as many as are lords in rocky Ithaca nor in the isles on the side of Elis, the pastureland of horses. Not one of these shall force me in mine own despite, if I choose to give this bow, yea once and for all, to the stranger to bear away with him. But do thou go to thine own chamber and mind thine own housewiferies, the loom and distaff, and bid thine handmaids ply their tasks. But the bow shall be for men, for all, but for me in chief, for mine is the lordship in the house.'

Then in amaze she went back to her chamber, for she laid up the wise saying of her son in her heart. She ascended to her upper chamber with the women her handmaids, and then was bewailing Odysseus, her dear lord, till grey-eyed Athene cast sweet sleep upon her eyelids.

Now the goodly swineherd had taken the curved bow, and was bearing it, when the wooers all cried out upon him in the halls. And thus some one of the haughty youths would speak: 'Whither now art thou bearing the curved bow, thou vagabond, thou wretched swineherd? Lo, soon shall the swift hounds of thine own breeding eat thee hard by thy swine, alone and away from men, if Apollo will be gracious to us and the other deathless gods.'

Even so they spake, and he took and set down the bow in that very place, being affrighted because many cried out on him in the halls. Then Telemachus from the other side spake threateningly, and called aloud:

'Father, bring hither the bow, soon shalt thou rue it that thou servest many masters. Take heed, lest I that am younger than thou pursue thee to the field, and pelt thee with stones, for in might I am the better. If only I were so much mightier in strength of arm than all the wooers that are in the halls, soon would I send many an one forth on an evil road from out our house, for they imagine mischief against us.'

So he spake, and all the wooers laughed sweetly at him, and ceased now from their cruel anger toward Telemachus. Then the swineherd bare the bow through the hall, and went up to wise Odysseus, and set it in his hands. And he called forth the nurse Eurycleia from the chamber and spake to her:

'Wise Eurycleia, Telemachus bids thee bar the well-fitting doors of thy chamber, and if any of the women hear the sound of groaning or the din of men within our walls, let them not go forth, but abide where they are in silence at their work.'

So he spake, and the word unwinged abode with her, and she barred the doors of the fair-lying halls.

Then Philoetius hasted forth silently from the house, and barred the outer gates of the fenced court. Now there lay beneath the corridor the cable of a curved ship, fashioned of the byblus plant, wherewith he made fast the gates, and then himself passed within. Then he went and sat on the settle whence he had risen, and gazed upon Odysseus. He already was handling the bow, turning it every way about, and proving it on this side and on that, lest the worms might have eaten the horns when the lord of the bow was away. And thus men spake looking each one to his neighbour:

'Verily he has a good eye, and a shrewd turn for a bow! It must be, methinks, that he himself has the like lying by at home or else he is set on making one, in such wise does he turn it hither and thither in his hands, this evil-witted beggar.'

And another again of the haughty youths would say: 'Oh, that the fellow may get wherewith to profit withal, just in such measure as he shall ever prevail to bend the bow!'

So spake the wooers, but Odysseus of many counsels had lifted the great bow and viewed it on every side, and even as when a man that is skilled in the lyre and in minstrelsy, easily stretches a cord about a new peg, after tying at either end the twisted sheep-gut, even so Odysseus straightway bent the great bow, all without effort, and took it in his right hand and proved the bow-string, which rang sweetly at the touch, in tone like a swallow. Then great grief came upon the wooers, and the colour of their countenance was changed, and Zeus thundered loud showing forth his tokens. And the steadfast goodly Odysseus was glad thereat, in that the son of deep-counselling Cronos had sent him a sign. Then he caught up a swift arrow which lay by his table, bare, but the other shafts were stored within the hollow quiver, those whereof the Achaeans were soon to taste. He took and laid it on the bridge of the bow, and held the notch and drew the string, even from the settle whereon he sat, and with straight aim shot the shaft and missed not one of the axes, beginning from the first axe-handle, and the bronze-weighted shaft passed clean through and out at the last. Then he spake to Telemachus, saying:

'Telemachus, thy guest that sits in the halls does thee no shame. In nowise did I miss my mark, nor was I wearied with long bending of the bow. Still is my might steadfast—not as the wooers say scornfully to slight me. But now is it time that supper too be got ready for the Achaeans, while it is yet light, and thereafter must we make other sport with the dance and the lyre, for these are the crown of the feast.'

Therewith he nodded with bent brows, and Telemachus, the dear son of divine Odysseus, girt his sharp sword about him and took the spear in his grasp, and stood by his high seat at his father's side, armed with the gleaming bronze.

BOOK XXII

The killing of the wooers.

Then Odysseus of many counsels stripped him of his rags and leaped on to the great threshold with his bow and quiver full of arrows, and poured forth all the swift shafts there before his feet, and spake among the wooers:

'Lo, now is this terrible trial ended at last; and now will I make for another mark, which never yet man has smitten, if perchance I may strike it and Apollo grant me renown.'

With that he pointed the bitter arrow at Antinous. Now he was about raising to his lips a fair twy-eared chalice of gold, and behold, he was handling it to drink of the wine, and death was far from his thoughts. For who among men at feast would deem that one man amongst so many, how hardy soever he were, would bring on him foul death and black fate? But Odysseus aimed and smote him with the arrow in the throat, and the point passed clean out through his delicate neck, and he fell back and the cup dropped from his hand as he was smitten, and at once through his nostrils there came up a thick jet of slain man's blood, and quickly he spurned the table from him with his foot, and spilt the food on the ground, and the bread and the roast flesh were defiled. Then the wooers raised a clamour through the halls when they saw the man fallen, and they leaped from their high seats, as men stirred by fear, all through the hall, peering everywhere along the well-builded walls, and nowhere was there a shield or mighty spear to lay hold on. Then they reviled Odysseus with angry words:

'Stranger, thou doest ill to shoot at men. Never again shalt thou enter other lists, now is utter doom assured thee. Yea, for now hast thou slain the man that was far the best of all the noble youths in Ithaca; wherefore vultures shall devour thee here.'

So each one spake, for indeed they thought that Odysseus had not slain him wilfully; but they knew not in their folly that on their own heads, each and all of them, the bands of death had been made fast. Then Odysseus of many counsels loured on them, and spake:

'Ye dogs, ye said in your hearts that I should never more come home from the land of the Trojans, in that ye wasted my house, and lay with the maidservants by force, and traitorously wooed my wife while I was yet alive, and ye had no fear of the gods, that hold the wide heaven, nor of the indignation of men hereafter. But now the bands of death have been made fast upon you one and all.'

Even so he spake, and pale fear gat hold on the limbs of all, and each man looked about, where he might shun utter doom. And Eurymachus alone answered him, and spake: 'If thou art indeed Odysseus of Ithaca, come home again, with right thou speakest thus, of all that the Achaeans have wrought, many infatuate deeds, in thy halls and many in the field. Howbeit, he now lies dead that is to blame for all, Antinous; for he brought all these things upon us, not as longing very greatly for the marriage nor needing it sore, but with another purpose, that Cronion has not fulfilled for him, namely, that he might himself be king over all the land of stablished Ithaca, and he was to have lain in wait for thy son and killed him. But now he is slain after his deserving, and do thou spare thy people, even thine own; and we will hereafter go about the township and yield thee amends for all that has been eaten and drunken in thy halls, each for himself bringing atonement of twenty oxen worth, and requiting thee in gold and bronze till thy heart is softened, but till then none may blame thee that thou art angry.'

Then Odysseus of many counsels looked askance on him, and said: 'Eurymachus, not even if ye gave me all your heritage, all that ye now have, and whatsoever else ye might in any wise add thereto, not even so would I henceforth hold my hands from slaying, ere the wooers had paid for all their transgressions. And now the choice lies before you, whether to fight in fair battle or to fly, if any may avoid death and the fates. But there be some, methinks, that shall not escape from utter doom.'

He spake, and their knees were straightway loosened and their hearts melted within them. And Eurymachus spake among them yet again:

'Friends, it is plain that this man will not hold his unconquerable hands, but now that he has caught up the polished bow and quiver, he will shoot from the smooth threshold, till he has slain us all; wherefore let us take thought for the delight of battle. Draw your blades, and hold up the tables for shields against the arrows of swift death, and let us all have at him with one accord, and drive him, if it may be, from the threshold and the doorway and then go through the city, and quickly would the cry be raised. Thereby should this man soon have shot his latest bolt.'

Therewith he drew his sharp two-edged sword of bronze, and leapt on Odysseus with a terrible cry, but in the same moment goodly Odysseus shot the arrow forth and struck him on the breast by the pap, and drave the swift shaft into his liver. So he let the sword fall from his hand, and grovelling over the table he bowed and fell, and spilt the food and the double cup on the floor. And in his agony he smote the ground with his brow, and spurning with both his feet he struck against the high seat, and the mist of death was shed upon his eyes.

Then Amphinomus made at renowned Odysseus, setting straight at him, and drew his sharp sword, if perchance he might make him give ground from the door. But Telemachus was beforehand with him, and cast and smote him from behind with a bronze-shod spear between the shoulders, and drave it out through the breast, and he fell with a crash and struck the ground full with his forehead. Then Telemachus sprang away, leaving the long spear fixed in Amphinomus, for he greatly dreaded lest one of the Achaeans might run upon him with his blade, and stab him as he drew forth the spear, or smite him with a down stroke of the sword. So he started and ran and came quickly to his father, and stood by him, and spake winged words:

'Father, lo, now I will bring thee a shield and two spears and a helmet all of bronze, close fitting on the temples, and when I return I will arm myself, and likewise give arms to the swineherd and to the neatherd yonder: for it is better to be clad in full armour.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered him saying: 'Run and bring them while I have arrows to defend me, lest they thrust me from the doorway, one man against them all.'

So he spake, and Telemachus obeyed his dear father, and went forth to the chamber, where his famous weapons were lying. Thence he took out four shields and eight spears, and four helmets of bronze, with thick plumes of horse hair, and he started to bring them and came quickly to his father. Now he girded the gear of bronze about his own body first, and in like manner the two thralls did on the goodly armour, and stood beside the wise and crafty Odysseus. Now he, so long as he had arrows to defend him, kept aiming and smote the wooers one by one in his house, and they fell thick one upon another. But when the arrows failed the prince in his archery, he leaned his bow against the doorpost of the stablished hall, against the shining faces of the entrance. As for him he girt his fourfold shield about his shoulders and bound on his mighty head a well wrought helmet, with horse hair crest, and terribly the plume waved aloft. And he grasped two mighty spears tipped with bronze.

Now there was in the well-builded wall a certain postern raised above the floor, and there by the topmost level of the threshold of the stablished hall, was a way into an open passage, closed by well-fitted folding doors. So Odysseus bade the goodly swineherd stand near thereto and watch the way, for thither was there but one approach. Then Agelaus spake among them, and declared his word to all:

'Friends, will not some man climb up to the postern, and give word to the people, and a cry would be raised straightway; so should this man soon have shot his latest bolt?'

Then Melanthius, the goatherd, answered him, saying: 'It may in no wise be, prince Agelaus; for the fair doors toward the court are grievously near to the postern, and perilous is the entrance to the passage, and one mighty man would keep back a host. But come, let me bring you armour from the inner chamber, that we may be clad in hauberks, for methinks it is in that room and no other, that Odysseus and his renowned son laid by the arms.'

Therewith Melanthius, the goatherd, climbed up by the clerestory of the hall to the inner chamber of Odysseus, whence he took twelve shields and as many spears, and as many helmets of bronze with thick plumes of horse hair, and he came forth and brought them speedily, and gave them to the wooers. Then the knees of Odysseus were loosened and his heart melted within him, when he saw them girding on the armour and brandishing the long spears in their hands, and great, he saw, was the adventure. Quickly he spake to Telemachus winged words:

'Telemachus, sure I am that one of the women in the halls is stirring up an evil battle against us, or perchance it is Melanthius.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him: 'My father, it is I that have erred herein and none other is to blame, for I left the well fitted door of the chamber open, and there has been one of them but too quick to spy it. Go now, goodly Eumaeus, and close the door of the chamber, and mark if it be indeed one of the women that does this mischief, or Melanthius, son of Dolius, as methinks it is.'

Even so they spake one to the other. And Melanthius, the goatherd, went yet again to the chamber to bring the fair armour. But the goodly swineherd was ware thereof, and quickly he spake to Odysseus who stood nigh him:

'Son of Laertes, of the seed of Zeus, Odysseus, of many devices, lo, there again is that baleful man, whom we ourselves suspect, going to the chamber; do thou tell me truly, shall I slay him if I prove the better man, or bring him hither to thee, that he may pay for the many transgressions that he has devised in thy house?'

Then Odysseus of many counsels answered saying: 'Verily, I and Telemachus will keep the proud wooers within the halls, for all their fury, but do ye twain tie his feet and upper limbs behind his back and cast him into the chamber, and close the doors after you, and make fast to his body a twisted rope, and drag him up the lofty pillar till he be near the roof beams, that he may hang there and live for long, and suffer grievous torment.'

So he spake, and they gave good heed and hearkened. So they went forth to the chamber, but the goatherd who was within knew not of their coming. Now he was seeking for the armour in the secret place of the chamber, but they twain stood in waiting on either side the door posts. And when Melanthius, the goatherd, was crossing the threshold with a goodly helm in one hand, and in the other a wide shield and an old, stained with rust, the shield of the hero Laertes that he bare when he was young—but at that time it was laid by, and the seams of the straps were loosened,—then the twain rushed on him and caught him, and dragged him in by the hair, and cast him on the floor in sorrowful plight, and bound him hand and foot in a bitter bond, tightly winding each limb behind his back, even as the son of Laertes bade them, the steadfast goodly Odysseus. And they made fast to his body a twisted rope, and dragged him up the lofty pillar till he came near the roof beams. Then didst thou speak to him and gird at him, swineherd Eumaeus:

'Now in good truth, Melanthius, shalt thou watch all night, lying on a soft bed as beseems thee, nor shall the early-born Dawn escape thy ken, when she comes forth from the streams of Oceanus, on her golden throne, in the hour when thou art wont to drive the goats for the wooers, to prepare a feast in the halls.'

So he was left there, stretched tight in the deadly bond. But they twain got into their harness, and closed the shining door, and went to Odysseus, wise and crafty chief. There they stood breathing fury, four men by the threshold, while those others within the halls were many and good warriors. Then Athene, daughter of Zeus, drew nigh them like Mentor in fashion and in voice, and Odysseus was glad when he saw her and spake, saying:

'Mentor, ward from us hurt, and remember me thy dear companion, that befriended thee often, and thou are of like age with me.'

So he spake, deeming the while that it was Athene, summoner of the host. But the wooers on the other side shouted in the halls, and first Agelaus son of Damastor rebuked Athene, saying:

'Mentor, let not the speech of Odysseus beguile thee to fight against the wooers, and to succour him. For methinks that on this wise we shall work our will. When we shall have slain these men, father and son, thereafter shalt thou perish with them, such deeds thou art set on doing in these halls; nay, with thine own head shalt thou pay the price. But when with the sword we shall have robbed you all of your force, we will mingle all thy possessions, all that thou hast at home or in the field, with the wealth of Odysseus, and we will not suffer thy sons nor thy daughters to dwell in the halls, nor thy good wife to gad about in the town of Ithaca.'

So spake he, and Athene waxed yet the more wroth at heart, and chid Odysseus with angry words: 'Odysseus, thou hast no more steadfast might nor any prowess, as when for nine whole years continually thou didst battle with the Trojans for high born Helen, of the white arms, and many men thou slewest in terrible warfare, and by thy device the wide-wayed city of Priam was taken. How then, now that thou art come to thy house and thine own possessions, dost thou bewail the need of courage to stand before the wooers? Nay come hither, friend, and stand by me, and I will show thee a thing, that thou mayest know what manner of man is Mentor, son of Alcimus, to repay good deeds in the ranks of foemen.'

She spake, and gave him not clear victory in full, but still for a while she made trial of the might and prowess of Odysseus and his renowned son. As for her she flew up to the roof timber of the murky hall, in such fashion as a swallow flies, and there sat down.

Now Agelaus, son of Damastor, urged on the wooers, and likewise Eurynomus and Amphimedon and Demoptolemus and Peisandrus son of Polyctor, and wise Polybus, for these were in valiancy far the best men of the wooers, that still lived and fought for their lives; for the rest had fallen already beneath the bow and the thick rain of arrows. Then Agelaus spake among them, and made known his word to all:

'Friends, now at last will this man hold his unconquerable hands. Lo, now has Mentor left him and spoken but vain boasts, and these remain alone at the entrance of the doors. Wherefore now, throw not your long spears all together, but come, do ye six cast first, if perchance Zeus may grant us to smite Odysseus and win renown. Of the rest will we take no heed, so soon as that man shall have fallen.'

So he spake and they all cast their javelins, as he bade them, eagerly; but behold, Athene so wrought that they were all in vain. One man smote the doorpost of the stablished hall, and another the well-fastened door, and the ashen spear of yet another wooer, heavy with bronze, stuck fast in the wall. So when they had avoided all the spears of the wooers, the steadfast goodly Odysseus began first to speak among them:

'Friends, now my word is that we too cast and hurl into the press of the wooers, that are mad to slay and strip us beyond the measure of their former iniquities.'

So he spake, and they all took good aim and threw their sharp spears, and Odysseus smote Demoptolemus, and Telemachus Euryades, and the swineherd slew Elatus, and the neatherd Peisandrus. Thus they all bit the wide floor with their teeth, and the wooers fell back into the inmost part of the hall. But the others dashed upon them, and drew forth the shafts from the bodies of the dead.

Then once more the wooers threw their sharp spears eagerly; but behold, Athene so wrought that many of them were in vain. One man smote the door-post of the stablished hall, and another the wall-fastened door, and the ashen spear of another wooer, heavy with bronze, struck in the wall. Yet Amphimedon hit Telemachus on the hand by the wrist lightly, and the shaft of bronze wounded the surface of the skin. And Ctesippus grazed the shoulder of Eumaeus with a long spear high above the shield, and the spear flew over and fell to the ground. Then again Odysseus, the wise and crafty, he and his men cast their swift spears into the press of the wooers, and now once more Odysseus, waster of cities, smote Eurydamas and Telemachus Amphimedon, and the swineherd slew Polybus, and last, the neatherd struck Ctesippus in the breast and boasted over him, saying:

'O son of Poytherses, thou lover of jeering, never give place at all to folly to speak so big, but leave thy case to the gods, since in truth they are far mightier than thou. This gift is thy recompense for the ox-foot that thou gavest of late to the divine Odysseus, when he went begging through the house.'

So spake the keeper of the shambling kine. Next Odysseus wounded the son of Damastor in close fight with his long spear, and Telemachus wounded Leocritus son of Euenor, right in the flank with his lance, and drave the bronze point clean through, that he fell prone and struck the ground full with his forehead. Then Athene held up her destroying aegis on high from the roof, and their minds were scared, and they fled through the hall, like a drove of kine that the flitting gadfly falls upon and scatters hither and thither in spring time, when the long days begin. But the others set on like vultures of crooked claws and curved beak, that come forth from the mountains and dash upon smaller birds, and these scour low in the plain, stooping in terror from the clouds, while the vultures pounce on them and slay them, and there is no help nor way of flight, and men are glad at the sport; even so did the company of Odysseus set upon the wooers and smite them right and left through the hall; and there rose a hideous moaning as their heads were smitten, and the floor all ran with blood.

Now Leiodes took hold of the knees of Odysseus eagerly, and besought him and spake winged words: 'I entreat thee by thy knees, Odysseus, and do thou show mercy on me and have pity. For never yet, I say, have I wronged a maiden in thy halls by froward word or deed, nay I bade the other wooers refrain, whoso of them wrought thus. But they hearkened not unto me to keep their hands from evil. Wherefore they have met a shameful death through their own infatuate deeds. Yet I, the soothsayer among them, that have wrought no evil, shall fall even as they, for no gratitude survives for good deeds done.'

Then Odysseus of many counsels looked askance at him, and said: 'If indeed thou dost avow thee to be the soothsayer of these men, thou art like to have often prayed in the halls that the issue of a glad return might be far from me, and that my dear wife should follow thee and bear thee children; wherefore thou shalt not escape the bitterness of death.'

Therewith he caught up a sword in his strong hand, that lay where Agelaus had let it fall to the ground when he was slain, and drave it clean through his neck, and as he yet spake his head fell even to the dust.

But the son of Terpes, the minstrel, still sought how he might shun black fate, Phemius, who sang among the wooers

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of necessity. He stood with the loud lyre in his hand hard by the postern gate, and his heart was divided within him, whether he should slip forth from the hall and sit down by the well-wrought altar of great Zeus of the household court, whereon Laertes and Odysseus had burnt many pieces of the thighs of oxen, or should spring forward and beseech Odysseus by his knees. And as he thought thereupon this seemed to him the better way, to embrace the knees of Odysseus, son of Laertes. So he laid the hollow lyre on the ground between the mixing-bowl and the high seat inlaid with silver, and himself sprang forward and seized Odysseus by the knees, and besought him and spake winged words:

'I entreat thee by thy knees, Odysseus, and do thou show mercy on me and have pity. It will be a sorrow to thyself in the aftertime if thou slayest me who am a minstrel, and sing before gods and men. Yea none has taught me but myself, and the god has put into my heart all manner of lays, and methinks I sing to thee as to a god, wherefore be not eager to cut off my head. And Telemachus will testify of this, thine own dear son, that not by mine own will or desire did I resort to thy house to sing to the wooers after their feasts; but being so many and stronger than I they led me by constraint.'

So he spake, and the mighty prince Telemachus heard him and quickly spake to his father at his side: 'Hold thy hand, and wound not this blameless man with the sword; and let us save also the henchman Medon, that ever had charge of me in our house when I was a child, unless perchance Philoetius or the swineherd have already slain him, or he hath met thee in thy raging through the house.'

So he spake, and Medon, wise of heart, heard him. For he lay crouching beneath a high seat, clad about in the new-flayed hide of an ox and shunned black fate. So he rose up quickly from under the seat, and cast off the ox-hide, and sprang forth and caught Telemachus by the knees, and besought him and spake winged words:

'Friend, here am I; prithee stay thy hand and speak to thy father, lest he harm me with the sharp sword in the greatness of his strength, out of his anger for the wooers that wasted his possessions in the halls, and in their folly held thee in no honour.'

And Odysseus of many counsels smiled on him and said: 'Take courage, for lo! he has saved thee and delivered thee, that thou mayest know in thy heart, and tell it even to another, how far more excellent are good deeds than evil. But go forth from the halls and sit down in the court apart from the slaughter, thou and the full-voiced minstrel, till I have accomplished all that I must needs do in the house.'

Therewith the two went forth and gat them from the hall. So they sat down by the altar of great Zeus, peering about on every side, still expecting death. And Odysseus peered all through the house, to see if any man was yet alive and hiding away to shun black fate. But he found all the sort of them fallen in their blood in the dust, like fishes that the fishermen have drawn forth in the meshes of the net into a hollow of the beach from out the grey sea, and all the fish, sore longing for the salt sea waves, are heaped upon the sand, and the sun shines forth and takes their life away; so now the wooers lay heaped upon each other. Then Odysseus of many counsels spake to Telemachus:

'Telemachus, go, call me the nurse Eurycleia, that I may tell her the word that is on my mind.'

So he spake, and Telemachus obeyed his dear father, and smote at the door, and spake to the nurse Eurycleia: 'Up now, aged wife, that overlookest all the women servants in our halls, come hither, my father calls thee and has somewhat to say to thee.'

Even so he spake, and his word unwinged abode with her, and she opened the doors of the fair-lying halls, and came forth, and Telemachus led the way before her. So she found Odysseus among the bodies of the dead, stained with blood and soil of battle, like a lion that has eaten of an ox of the homestead and goes on his way, and all his breast and his cheeks on either side are flecked with blood, and he is terrible to behold; even so was Odysseus stained, both hands and feet. Now the nurse, when she saw the bodies of the dead and the great gore of blood, made ready to cry aloud for joy, beholding so great an adventure. But Odysseus checked and held her in her eagerness, and uttering his voice spake to her winged words:

'Within thine own heart rejoice, old nurse, and be still, and cry not aloud; for it is an unholy thing to boast over slain men. Now these hath the destiny of the gods overcome, and their own cruel deeds, for they honoured none of earthly men, neither the good nor yet the bad, that came among them. Wherefore they have met a shameful death through their own infatuate deeds. But come, tell me the tale of the women in my halls, which of them dishonour me, and which be guiltless.'

Then the good nurse Eurycleia answered him: 'Yea now, my child, I will tell thee all the truth. Thou hast fifty women-servants in thy halls, that we have taught the ways of housewifery, how to card wool and to bear bondage. Of these twelve in all have gone the way of shame, and honour not me, nor their lady Penelope. And Telemachus hath but newly come to his strength, and his mother suffered him not to take command over the women in this house. But now, let me go aloft to the shining upper chamber, and tell all to thy wife, on whom some god hath sent a sleep.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered her saying: 'Wake her not yet, but bid the women come hither, who in time past behaved themselves unseemly.'

So he spake, and the old wife passed through the hall to tell the women and to hasten their coming. Then Odysseus called to him Telemachus, and the neatherd, and the swineherd, and spake to them winged words:

'Begin ye now to carry out the dead, and bid the women help you, and thereafter cleanse the fair high seats and the tables with water and porous sponges. And when ye have set all the house in order, lead the maidens without the stablished hall, between the kitchen dome and the sacred fence of the court, and there slay them with your long blades, till they shall have all given up the ghost and forgotten the love that of old they had at the bidding of the wooers, in secret dalliance.'

Even so he spake, and the women came all in a crowd together, making a terrible lament and shedding big tears. So first they carried forth the bodies of the slain, and set them beneath the corridor of the fenced court, and propped them one on another; and Odysseus himself hasted the women and directed them, and they carried forth the dead perforce. Thereafter they cleansed the fair high seats and the tables with water and porous sponges. And Telemachus, and the neatherd, and the swineherd, scraped with spades the floor of the well-builded house, and, behold, the maidens carried all forth and laid it without the doors.

Now when they had made an end of setting the hall in order, they led the maidens forth from the stablished hall, and drove them up in a narrow space between the kitchen dome and the sacred fence of the court, whence none might avoid; and wise Telemachus began to speak to his fellows, saying:

'God forbid that I should take these women's lives by a clean death, these that have poured dishonour on my head and on my mother, and have lain with the wooers.'

With that word he tied the cable of a dark-prowed ship to a great pillar and flung it round the kitchen-dome, and fastened it aloft, that none might touch the ground with her feet. And even as when thrushes, long of wing, or doves fall into a net that is set in a thicket, as they seek to their roosting-place, and a hateful bed harbours them, even so the women held their heads all in a row, and about all their necks nooses were cast, that they might die by the most pitiful death. And they writhed with their feet for a little space, but for no long while.

Then they led out Melanthius through the gateway and the court, and cut off his nostrils and his ears with the pitiless sword, and drew forth his vitals for the dogs to devour raw, and cut off his hands and feet in their cruel anger.

Thereafter they washed their hands and feet, and went into the house to Odysseus, and all the adventure was over. So Odysseus called to the good nurse Eurycleia: 'Bring sulphur, old nurse, that cleanses all pollution and bring me fire, that I may purify the house with sulphur, and do thou bid Penelope come here with her handmaidens, and tell all the women in the house to speed them hither.'

Then the good nurse Eurycleia made answer: 'Yea, my child, herein thou hast spoken aright. But go to, let me bring thee a mantle and a doubtlet for raiment, and stand not thus in the halls with thy broad shoulders wrapped in rags; it were blame in thee so to do.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered her saying: 'First let a fire now be made me in the hall.'

So he spake, and the good nurse Eurycleia was not slow to obey, but brought fire and brimstone; and Odysseus thoroughly purged the women's chamber and the great hall and the court.

Then the old wife went through the fair halls of Odysseus to tell the women, and to hasten their coming. So they came forth from their chamber with torches in their hands, and fell about Odysseus, and embraced him and kissed and clasped his head and shoulders and his hands lovingly, and a sweet longing came on him to weep and moan, for he remembered them every one.

BOOK XXIII

Odysseus maketh himself known to Penelope, tells his adventures briefly, and in the morning goes to Laertes and makes himself known to him.

THEN the ancient woman went up into the upper chamber laughing aloud, to tell her mistress how her dear lord was within, and her knees moved fast for joy, and her feet stumbled one over the other; and she stood above the lady's head and spake to her, saying:

'Awake, Penelope, dear child, that thou mayest see with thine own eyes that which thou desirest day by day. Odysseus hath come, and hath got him to his own house, though late hath he come, and hath slain the proud wooers that troubled his house, and devoured his substance, and oppressed his child.'

Then wise Penelope answered her: 'Dear nurse, the gods have made thee distraught, the gods that can make foolish even the wisdom of the wise, and that stablish the simple in understanding. They it is that have marred thy reason, though heretofore thou hadst a prudent heart. Why dost thou mock me, who have a spirit full of sorrow, to speak these wild words, and rousest me out of sweet slumber, that had bound me and overshadowed mine eyelids? Never yet have I slept so sound since the day that Odysseus went forth to see that evil Ilios, never to be named. Go to now, get thee down and back to the women's chamber, for if any other of the maids of my house had come and brought me such tidings, and wakened me from sleep, straightway would I have sent her back right rudely to return within the women's chamber; but this time thine old age shall stand thee in good stead.'

Then the good nurse Eurycleia answered her: 'I mock thee not, dear child, but in very deed Odysseus is here, and hath come home, even as I tell thee. He is that guest on whom all men wrought such dishonour in the halls. But long ago Telemachus was ware of him, that he was within the house, yet in his prudence he hid the counsels of his father, that he might take vengeance on the violence of the haughty wooers.'

Thus she spake, and then was Penelope glad, and leaping from her bed she fell on the old woman's neck, and let fall the tears from her eyelids, and uttering her voice spake to her winged words: 'Come, dear nurse, I pray thee, tell me all the truth, if indeed he hath come home as thou sayest, how he hath laid his hands on the shameless wooers, he being but one man, while they abode ever in their companies within the house.'

Then the good nurse Eurycleia answered her: 'I saw not, I wist not, only I heard the groaning of men slain. And we in an inmost place of the well-builded chambers sat all amazed, and the close-fitted doors shut in the room, till thy son called me from the chamber, for his father sent him out to that end. Then I found Odysseus standing among the slain, who around him, stretched on the hard floor, lay one upon the other; it would have comforted thy heart to see him, all stained like a lion with blood and soil of battle. And now are all the wooers gathered in an heap by the gates of the court, while he is purifying his fair house with brimstone, and hath kindled a great fire, and hath sent me forth to call thee. So come with me, that ye may both enter into your heart's delight, for ye have suffered much affliction. And even now hath this thy long desire been fulfilled; thy lord hath come alive to his own hearth, and hath found both thee and his son in the halls; and the wooers that wrought him evil he hath slain, every man of them in his house.'

Then wise Penelope answered her: 'Dear nurse, boast not yet over them with laughter. Thou knowest how welcome the sight of him would be in the halls to all, and to me in chief, and to his son that we got between us. But this is no true tale, as thou declarest it, nay but it is one of the deathless gods that hath slain the proud wooers, in wrath at their bitter insolence and evil deeds. For they honoured none of earthly men, neither the good nor yet the bad, that came among them. Wherefore they have suffered an evil doom through their own infatuate deeds. But Odysseus, far away hath lost his homeward path to the Achaean land, and himself is lost.'

Then the good nurse Eurycleia made answer to her: 'My child, what word hath escaped the door of thy lips, in that thou saidest that thy lord, who is even now within, and by his own hearth stone, would return no more? Nay, thy heart is ever hard of belief. Go to now, and I will tell thee besides a most manifest token, even the scar of the wound that the boar on a time dealt him with his white tusk. This I spied while washing his feet, and fain I would have told it even to thee, but he laid his hand on my mouth, and in the fulness of his wisdom suffered me not to speak. But come with me and I will stake my life on it; and, if I play thee false, do thou slay me by a death most pitiful.'

Then wise Penelope made answer to her: 'Dear nurse, it is hard for thee, how wise soever, to spy out the purposes of the everlasting gods. None the less let us go to my child, that I may see the wooers dead, and him that slew them.'

With that word she went down from the upper chamber, and much her heart debated, whether she should stand apart, and question her dear lord or draw nigh, and clasp and kiss his head and hands. But when she had come within and had crossed the threshold of stone, she sat down over against

Odysseus, in the light of the fire, by the further wall. Now he was sitting by the tall pillar, looking down and waiting to know if perchance his noble wife would speak to him, when her eyes beheld him. But she sat long in silence, and amazement came upon her soul, and now she would look upon him steadfastly with her eyes, and now again she knew him not, for that he was clad in vile raiment. And Telemachus rebuked her, and spake and hailed her:

'Mother mine, ill mother, of an ungentle heart, why turnest thou thus away from my father, and dost not sit by him and question him and ask him all? No other woman in the world would harden her heart to stand thus aloof from her lord, who after much travail and sore had come to her in the twentieth year to his own country. But thy heart is ever harder than stone.'

Then wise Penelope answered him, saying: 'Child, my mind is amazed within me, and I have no strength to speak, nor to ask him aught, nay nor to look on him face to face. But if in truth this be Odysseus, and he hath indeed come home, verily we shall be ware of each other the more surely, for we have tokens that we twain know, even we, secret from all others.'

So she spake, and the steadfast goodly Odysseus smiled, and quickly he spake to Telemachus winged words: 'Telemachus, leave now thy mother to make trial of me within the chambers; so shall she soon come to a better knowledge than heretofore. But now I go filthy, and am clad in vile raiment, wherefore she has me in dishonour, and as yet will not allow that I am he. Let us then advise us how all may be for the very best. For whoso has slain but one man in a land, even one that leaves not many behind him to take up the feud for him, turns outlaw and leaves his kindred and his own country; but we have slain the very stay of the city, the men who were far the best of all the noble youths in Ithaca. So this I bid thee consider.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'Father, see thou to this, for they say that thy counsel is far the best among men, nor might any other of mortal men contend with thee. But right eagerly will we go with thee now, and I think we shall not lack prowess, so far as might is ours.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered him saying: 'Yea now, I will tell on what wise methinks it is best. First, go ye to the bath and array you in your doublets, and bid the maidens in the chambers to take to them their garments. Then let the divine minstrel, with his loud lyre in hand, lead off for us the measure of the mirthful dance. So shall any man that hears the sound from without, whether a wayfarer or one of those that dwell around, say that it is a wedding feast. And thus the slaughter of the wooers shall not be noised abroad through the town before we go forth to our well-wooded farm land. Thereafter shall we consider what gainful counsel the Olympian may vouchsafe us.'

So he spake, and they gave good ear and hearkened to him. So first they went to the bath, and arrayed them in doublets, and the women were apparelled, and the divine minstrel took the hollow harp, and aroused in them the desire of sweet song and of the happy dance. Then the great hall rang round them with the sound of the feet of dancing men and of fair-girdled women. And whoso heard it from without would say:

'Surely some one has wedded the queen of many wooers. Hard of heart was she, nor had she courage to keep the great house of her gentle lord continually till his coming.'

Even so men spake, and knew not how these things were ordained. Meanwhile, the house-dame Eurynome had bathed the great-hearted Odysseus within his house, and anointed him with olive-oil, and cast about him a goodly mantle and a doublet. Moreover Athene shed great beauty from his head downwards, and made him greater and more mighty to behold, and from his head caused deep curling locks to flow, like the hyacinth flower. And as when some skilful man overlays gold upon silver, one that Hephaestus and Pallas Athene have taught all manner of craft, and full of grace is his handiwork, even so did Athene shed grace about his head and shoulders, and forth from the bath he came, in form like to the Immortals. Then he sat down again on the high seat, whence he had arisen, over against his wife, and spake to her, saying:

'Strange lady, surely to thee above all womankind the Olympians have given a heart that cannot be softened. No other woman in the world would harden her heart to stand thus aloof from her husband, who after much travail and sore had come to her, in the twentieth year, to his own country. Nay come, nurse, strew a bed for me to lie all alone, for assuredly her spirit within her is as iron.'

Then wise Penelope answered him again: 'Strange man, I have no proud thoughts nor do I think scorn of thee, nor am I too greatly astonied, but I know right well what manner of man thou wert, when thou wentest forth out of Ithaca, on the long-oared galley. But come, Eurycleia, spread for him the good bedstead outside the stablished bridal chamber that he built himself. Thither bring ye forth the good bedstead and cast bedding thereon, even fleeces and rugs and shining blankets.'

So she spake and made trial of her lord, but Odysseus in sore displeasure spake to his true wife, saying: 'Verily a bitter word is this, lady, that thou hast spoken. Who has set my bed otherwhere? Hard it would be for one, how skilled so ever, unless a god were to come that might easily set it in another place, if so he would. But of men there is none living, howsoever strong in his youth, that could lightly upheave it, for a great marvel is wrought in the fashion of the bed, and it was I that made it and none other. There was growing a bush of olive, long of leaf, and most goodly of growth, within the innner court, and the stem as large as a pillar. Round about this I built the chamber, till I had finished it, with stones close set, and I roofed it over well and added thereto compacted doors fitting well. Next I sheared off all the light wood of the long-leaved olive, and rough-hewed the trunk upwards from the root, and smoothed it around with the adze, well and skilfully, and made straight the line thereto and so fashioned it into the bed post, and I bored it all with the auger. Beginning from this bed-post, I wrought at the bedstead till I had finished it, and made it fair with inlaid work of gold and of silver and of ivory. Then I made fast therein a bright purple band of oxhide. Even so I declare to thee this token, and I know not, lady, if the bedstead be yet fast in his place, or if some man has cut away the stem of the olive tree, and set the bedstead otherwhere.'

So he spake, and at once her knees were loosened, and her heart melted within her, as she knew the sure tokens that Odysseus showed her. Then she fell a weeping, and ran straight toward him and cast her hands about his neck, and kissed his head and spake, saying:

'Murmur not against me, Odysseus, for thou wert ever at other times the wisest of men. It is the gods that gave us sorrow, the gods who were jealous that we should abide together and have joy of our youth, and come to the threshold of old age. So now be not wroth with me hereat nor full of indignation, because I did not welcome thee gladly as now, when first I saw thee. For always my heart within my breast shuddered, for fear lest some man should come and deceive me with his words, for many they be that devise gainful schemes and evil. Nay even Argive Helen, daughter of Zeus, would not have lain with a stranger, and taken him for a lover, had she known that the warlike sons of the Achaeans would bring her home again to her own dear country. Howsoever, it was the god that set her upon this shameful deed; nor ever, ere that, did she lay up in her heart the thought of this folly, a bitter folly, whence on us too first came sorrow. But now that thou hast told all the sure tokens of our bed, which never was seen by mortal man, save by thee and me and one maiden only, the daughter of Actor, that my father gave me ere yet I had come hither, she who kept the doors of our strong bridal chamber, even now dost thou bend my soul, all ungentle as it is.'

Thus she spake, and in his heart she stirred yet a greater longing to lament, and he wept as he embraced his beloved wife and true. And even as when the sight of land is welcome to swimmers, whose well-wrought ship Poseidon hath smitten on the deep, all driven with the wind and swelling waves, and but a remnant hath escaped the grey sea-water and swum to the shore, and their bodies are all crusted with the brine, and gladly have they set foot on land and escaped an evil end; so welcome to her was the sight of her lord, and her white arms she would never quite let go from his neck. And now would the rosy-fingered Dawn have risen upon their weeping, but the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, had other thoughts. The night she held long in the utmost West, and on the other side she stayed the golden-throned Dawn by the stream Oceanus, and suffered her not to harness the swift-footed steeds that bear light to men, Lampus and Phaethon, the steeds ever young that bring the morning.

Then at the last, Odysseus of many counsels spake to his wife, saying: 'Lady, we have not yet come to the issue of all our labours; but still there will be toil unmeasured, long and difficult, that I must needs bring to a full end. Even so the spirit of Teiresias foretold to me, on that day when I went down into the house of Hades, to inquire after a returning for myself and my company. Wherefore come, lady, let us to bed, that forthwith we may take our joy of rest beneath the spell of sweet sleep.'

Then wise Penelope answered him: 'Thy bed verily shall be ready whensoever thy soul desires it, forasmuch as the gods have indeed caused thee to come back to thy stablished home and thine own country. But now that thou hast noted it and the god has put it into thy heart, come, tell me of this ordeal, for methinks the day will come when I must learn it, and timely knowledge is no hurt.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered her saying: 'Ah, why now art thou so instant with me to declare it? Yet I will tell thee all and hide nought. Howbeit thy heart shall have no joy of it, as even I myself have no pleasure therein. For Teiresias bade me fare to many cities of men, carrying a shapen oar in my hands, till I should come to such men as know not the sea, neither eat meat savoured with salt, nor have they knowledge of ships of purple cheek nor of shapen oars, which serve for wings to ships. And he told me this most manifest token, which I will not hide from thee. In the day when another wayfarer should meet me and say that I had a winnowing fan on my stout shoulder, even then he bade me make fast my shapen oar in the earth, and do goodly sacrifice to the lord Poseidon, even with a ram and a bull and a boar, the mate of swine, and depart for home, and offer holy hecatombs to the deathless gods, that keep the wide heaven, to each in order due. And from the sea shall mine own death come, the gentlest death that may be, which shall end me, foredone with smooth old age, and the folk shall dwell happily around. All this, he said, was to be fulfilled.'

Then wise Penelope answered him saying: 'If indeed the gods will bring about for thee a happier old age at the last, then is there hope that thou mayest yet have an escape from evil.'

Thus they spake one to the other. Meanwhile, Eurynome and the nurse spread the bed with soft coverlets, by the light of the torches burning. But when they had busied them and spread the good bed, the ancient nurse went back to her chamber to lie down, and Eurynome, the bowermaiden, guided them on their way to the couch, with torches in her hands, and when she had led them to the bridal-chamber she departed. And so they came gladly to the rites of their bed, as of old. But Telemachus, and the neatherd, and the swineherd stayed their feet from dancing, and made the women to cease, and themselves gat them to rest through the shadowy halls.

Now when the twain had taken their fill of sweet love, they had delight in the tales, which they told one to the other. The fair lady spoke of all that she had endured in the halls at the sight of the ruinous throng of wooers, who for her sake slew many cattle, kine and goodly sheep; and many a cask of wine was broached. And in turn, Odysseus, of the seed of Zeus, recounted all the griefs he had wrought on men, and all his own travail and sorrow and she was delighted with the story, and sweet sleep fell not upon her eyelids till the tale was ended.

He began by setting forth how he overcame the Cicones, and next arrived at the rich land of the Lotus-eaters, and all that the Cyclops wrought, and what a price he got from him for the Cyclops wrought, and what a price he got from him for the good companions that he devoured, and showed no pity. Then how he came to Aeolus, who received him gladly and sent him on his way; but it was not yet ordained that he should reach his own country, for the storm-wind seized him again, and bare him over the teeming seas, making grievous moan. Next how he came to Telepylus of the Laestrygonians, who brake his ships and slew all his goodly-greaved companions, and Odysseus only escaped with his black ship. Then he told all the wiles and many contrivances of Circe, and how in a benched ship he fared to the dank house of Hades, to seek to the soul of Theban Teiresias. There he beheld all those that had been his companions, and his mother who bore him and nurtured him, while yet he was a little one. Then how he heard the song of the full-voiced Sirens, and came to the Rocks Wandering, and to terrible Charybdis, and to Scylla, that never yet have men avoided scatheless. Next he told how his company slew the kine of Helios, and how Zeus, that thunders on high, smote the swift ship with the flaming bolt, and the good crew perished all together, and he alone escaped from evil fates. And how he came to the isle Ogygia, and to the nymph Calypso, who kept him there in her hollow caves, longing to have him for her lord, and nurtured him and said that she would make him never to know death or age all his days: yet she never won his heart within his breast. Next how with great toil he came to the Phaeacians, who gave him all worship heartily, as to a god, and sent him with a ship to his own dear country, with gifts of bronze, and of gold, and raiment in plenty. This was the last word of the tale, when sweet sleep came speedily upon him, sleep that loosens the limbs of men, unknitting the cares of his soul.

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, turned to new thoughts. When she conceived that Odysseus had taken his fill of love and sleep, straightway she aroused from out Oceanus the golden-throned Dawn, to bear light to men. Then Odysseus gat him up from his soft bed, and laid this charge on his wife, saying:

'Lady, already have we had enough of labours, thou and I; thou, in weeping here, and longing for my troublous return, I, while Zeus and the other gods bound me fast in pain, despite my yearning after home, away from mine own country. But now that we both have come to the bed of our desire, take thou thought for the care of my wealth within the halls. But as for the sheep that the proud wooers have slain, I myself will lift many more as spoil, and others the Achaeans will give, till they fill all my folds. But now, behold, I go to the well-wooded farm land, to see my good father, who for love of me has been in sorrow continually. And this charge I lay on thee, lady, too wise though thou art to need it. Quickly will the bruit go forth with the rising sun, the bruit concerning the wooers, whom I slew in the halls. Wherefore ascend with the women thy handmaids into the upper chamber, and sit there and look on no man, nor ask any questions.'

Therewith he girded on his shoulder his goodly armour, and roused Telemachus and the neatherd and the swineherd, and bade them all take weapons of war in their hands. So they were not disobedient to his word, but clad themselves in mail, and opened the doors and went forth, and Odysseus led the way. And now there was light over all the earth; but them Athene hid in night, and quickly conducted out of the town.

BOOK XXIV

The Ithacans bury the wooers, and sitting in council resolve on revenge. And coming near the house of Laertes, are met by Odysseus, and Laertes with Telemachus and servants, the whole number twelve, and are overcome, and submit.

Now Cyllenian Hermes called forth from the halls the souls of the wooers, and he held in his hand his wand that is fair and golden, wherewith he lulls the eyes of men, of whomso he will, while others again he even wakens out of sleep. Herewith he roused and led the souls who followed gibbering. And even as bats flit gibbering in the secret place of a wondrous cave, when one has fallen down out of the rock from the cluster, and they cling each to each up aloft, even so the souls gibbered as they fared together, and Hermes, the helper, led them down the dank ways. Past the streams of Oceanus and the White Rock, past the gates of the Sun they sped and the land of dreams, and soon they came to the mead of asphodel, where dwell the souls, the phantoms of men outworn. There they found the soul of Achilles son of Peleus, and the souls of Patroclus, and of noble Antilochus, and of Aias, who in face and form was goodliest of all the Danaans after the noble son of Peleus.

So these were flocking round Achilles, and the spirit of Agamemnon, son of Atreus, drew nigh sorrowful; and about him were gathered all the other shades, as many as perished with him in the house of Aegisthus, and met their doom. Now the soul of the son of Peleus spake to him first, saying:

'Son of Atreus, verily we deemed that thou above all other heroes wast evermore dear to Zeus, whose joy is in the thunder, seeing that thou wast lord over warriors, many and mighty men, in the land of the Trojans where we Achaeans suffered affliction. But lo, thee too was deadly doom to visit early, the doom that none avoids of all men born. Ah, would that in the fulness of thy princely honour, thou hadst met death and fate in the lands of the Trojans. So would all the Achaean host have builded thee a barrow, yea and for thy son thou wouldst have won great glory in the aftertime. But now it has been decreed for thee to perish by a most pitiful death.'

Then the soul of the son of Atreus answered, and spake: 'Happy art thou son of Peleus, godlike Achilles, that didst die in Troy-land far from Argos, and about thee fell others, the best of the sons of Trojans and Achaeans, fighting for thy body; but thou in the whirl of dust layest mighty and mightily fallen, forgetful of thy chivalry. And we strove the livelong day, nor would we ever have ceased from the fight, if Zeus had not stayed us with a tempest. Anon when we had borne thee to the ships, from out the battle, we laid thee on a bier and washed thy fair flesh clean with warm water and unguents, and around thee the Danaans shed many a hot tear and shore their hair. And forth from the sea came thy mother with the deathless maidens of the waters, when they heard the tidings; and a wonderful wailing rose over the deep, and trembling fell on the limbs of all the Achaeans. Yea, and they would have sprung up and departed to the hollow ships, had not one held them back that knew much lore from of old, Nestor, whose counsel proved heretofore the best. Out of his good will he made harangue, and spake among them:

'"Hold, ye Argives, flee not, young lords of the Achaeans.

Lo, his mother from the sea is she that comes, with the deathless maidens of the waters, to behold the face of her dead son."

'So he spake, and the high-hearted Achaeans ceased from their flight. Then round thee stood the daughters of the ancient one of the sea, holding a pitiful lament, and they clad thee about in raiment incorruptible. And all the nine Muses one to the other replying with sweet voices began the dirge; there thou wouldest not have seen an Argive but wept, so mightily rose up the clear chant. Then for seventeen days and nights continually did we all bewail thee, immortal gods and mortal men. On the eighteenth day we gave thy body to the flames, and many well-fatted sheep we slew around thee, and kine of shambling gait. So thou wert burned in the garments of the gods, and in much unguents and in sweet honey, and many heroes of the Achaeans moved mail-clad around the pyre when thou wast burning, both footmen and horse, and great was the noise that arose. But when the flame of Hephaestus had utterly abolished thee, lo, in the morning we gathered together thy white bones, Achilles, and bestowed them in unmixed wine and in unguents. Thy mother gave a twy-handled golden urn, and said that it was the gift of Dionysus, and the workmanship of renowned Hephaestus. Therein lie thy white bones, great Achilles, and mingled therewith the bones of Patroclus son of Menoetias, that is dead, but apart is the dust of Antilochus, whom thou didst honour above all thy other companions, after Patroclus that was dead. Then over them did we pile a great and goodly tomb, we the holy host of Argive warriors, high on a jutting headland over wide Hellespont, that it might be far seen from off the sea by men that now are, and by those that shall be hereafter. Then thy mother asked the gods for glorious prizes in the games, and set them in the midst of the lists for the champions of the Achaeans. In days past thou hast been at the funeral games of many a hero, whenso, after some king's death, the young men gird themselves and make them ready for the meed of victory; but couldst thou have seen these gifts thou wouldst most have marvelled in spirit, such glorious prizes did the goddess set there to honour thee, even Thetis, the silver-footed; for very dear wert thou to the gods. Thus not even in death hast thou lost thy name, but to thee shall there be a fair renown for ever among all men, Achilles. But what profit have I now herein, that I have wound up the clew of war, for on my return Zeus devised for me an evil end at the hands of Aegisthus and my wife accursed?'

So they spake one to the other. And nigh them came the Messenger, the slayer of Argos, leading down the ghosts of the wooers by Odysseus slain, and the two heroes were amazed at the sight and went straight toward them. And the soul of Agamemnon, son of Atreus, knew the dear son of Melaneus, renowned Amphimedon, who had been his host, having his dwelling in Ithaca. The soul of the son of Atreus spake to him first, saying:

'Amphimedon, what hath befallen you, that ye have come beneath the darkness of earth, all of you picked men and of like age? it is even as though one should choose out and gather together the best warriors in a city. Did Poseidon smite you in your ships and rouse up contrary winds and the long waves? Or did unfriendly men, perchance, do you hurt upon the land as ye were cutting off their oxen and fair flocks of sheep, or while they fought to defend their city and the women thereof? Answer and tell me, for I avow me a friend of thy house. Rememberest thou not the day when I came to your house in Ithaca with godlike Menelaus, to urge Odysseus to follow with me to Ilios on the decked ships? And it was a full month ere we had sailed all across the wide sea, for scarce could we win to our cause Odysseus, waster of cities.'

Then the ghost of Amphimedon answered him, and spake: 'Most famous son of Atreus, king of men, Agamemnon, I remember all these things, O fosterling of Zeus, as thou declarest them, and I in turn will tell thee all the tale well and truly, even our death and evil end, on what wise it befell. We wooed the wife of Odysseus that was long afar, and she neither refused the hated bridal nor was minded to make an end, devising for us death and black fate. Also this other wile she contrived in her heart. She set up in her halls a mighty web, fine of woof and very wide, whereat she would weave, and anon she spake among us:

'"Ye princely youths, my wooers, now that goodly Odysseus is dead, do ye abide patiently, how eager soever to speed on this marriage of mine, till I finish the robe. I would not that the threads perish to no avail, even this shroud for the hero Laertes, against the day when the ruinous doom shall bring him low, of death that lays men at their length. So shall none of the Achaean women in the land count it blame in me, as well might be, were he to lie without a winding-sheet, a man that had gotten great possessions."

'So spake she, and our high hearts consented thereto. So then in the daytime she would weave the mighty web, and in the night unravel the same, when she had let place the torches by her. Thus for the space of three years she hid the thing by guile and won the minds of the Achaeans; but when the fourth year arrived and the seasons came round, as the months waned and many days were accomplished, then it was that one of her women who knew all declared it, and we found her unravelling the splendid web. Thus she finished it perforce and sore against her will. Now when she brought the robe to light, after she had woven the great web and washed it, and it shone even as sun or moon, at that very hour some evil god led Odysseus, I know not whence, to the upland farm, where the swineherd abode in his dwelling. Thither too came the dear son of divine Odysseus out of sandy Pylos, voyaging with his black ship. These twain framed an evil death for the wooers, and came to the renowned town. Odysseus verily came the later, and Telemachus went before and led the way. Now the swineherd brought Odysseus clad in vile raiment, in the likeness of a beggar, a wretched man and an old, leaning on a staff, and behold, he was clad about in sorry raiment. And none of us, not even the elders, could know him for that he was, on this his sudden appearing, but with evil words we assailed him and hurled things at him. Yet for a while he hardened his heart to endure both the hurlings and the evil words in his own halls; but at the last, when the spirit of Zeus, lord of the aegis, aroused him, by the help of Telemachus he took up all the goodly weapons, and laid them by in the inner chamber and drew the bolts. Next in his great craft he bade his wife to offer his bow and store of grey iron to the wooers to be the weapons of our contest, luckless that we were, and the beginning of death. Now not one of us could stretch the string of the strong bow; far short we fell of that might. But when the great bow came to the hands of Odysseus, then we all clamoured and forbade to give him the bow, how much soever he might speak, but Telemachus alone was instant with him and commanded him to take it. Then he took the bow into his hands, the steadfast goodly Odysseus, and lightly he strung it, and sent the arrow through the iron. Then straight he went to the threshold and there took his stand, and poured forth the swift arrows, glancing terribly around and smote the king Antinous. Thereafter on the others he let fly his bolts, winged for death, with straight aim, and the wooers fell thick one upon another. Then was it known how that some god was their helper, for pressing on as their passion drave them, they slew the men right and left through the halls, and thence there arose a hideous moaning, as heads were smitten and the floor all ran with blood. So we perished, Agamemnon, and even now our bodies lie uncared for in the halls of Odysseus, for the friends of each one at home as yet know nought, even they who might wash the black-clotted blood out of our wounds, and lay out the bodies and wail the dirge, for that is the due of the dead.'

Then the ghost of the son of Atreus answered him: 'Ah, happy son of Laertes, Odysseus of many devices, yea, for a wife most excellent hast thou gotten, so good was the wisdom of constant Penelope daughter of Icarius, that was duly mindful of Odysseus, her gentle lord. Wherefore the fame of her virtue shall never perish, but the immortals will make a gracious song in the ears of men on earth to the fame of constant Penelope. In far other wise did the daughter of Tyndareus devise ill deeds, and slay her gentle lord, and hateful shall the song of her be among men, and an evil repute hath she brought upon all womankind, even on the upright.'

Even so these twain spake one to the other, standing in the house of Hades, beneath the secret places of the earth.

Now when those others had gone down from the city, quickly they came to the rich and well-ordered farm land of Laertes, that he had won for himself of old, as the prize of great toil in war. There was his house, and all about it ran the huts wherein the thralls were wont to eat and dwell and sleep, bondsmen that worked his will. And in the house there was an old Sicilian woman, who diligently cared for the old man, in the upland far from the city. There Odysseus spake to his thralls and to his son, saying:

'Do ye now get you within the well-builded house, and quickly sacrifice the best of the swine for the midday meal, but I will make trial of my father, whether he will know me again and be aware of me when he sees me, or know me not, so long have I been away.'

Therewith he gave the thralls his weapons of war. Then they went speedily to the house, while Odysseus drew near to the fruitful vineyard to make trial of his father. Now he found not Dolius there, as he went down into the great garden, nor any of the thralls nor of their sons. It chanced that they had all gone to gather stones for a garden fence, and the old man at their head. So he found his father alone in the terraced vineyard, digging about a plant. He was clothed in a filthy doublet, patched and unseemly, with clouted leggings of oxhide bound about his legs, against the scratches of the thorns, and long sleeves over his hands by reason of the brambles, and on his head he wore a goatskin cap, and so he nursed his sorrow. Now when the steadfast goodly Odysseus saw his father thus wasted with age and in great grief of heart, he stood still beneath a tall pear tree and let fall a tear. Then he communed with his heart and soul, whether he should fall on his father's neck and kiss him, and tell him all, how he had returned and come to his own country, or whether he should first question him and prove him in every word. And as he thought within himself, this seemed to him the better way, namely, first to prove his father and speak to him sharply. So with this intent the goodly Odysseus went up to him. Now he was holding his head down and kept digging about the plant, while his renowned son stood by him and spake, saying:

'Old man, thou hast no lack of skill in tending a garden; lo, thou carest well for all, nor is there aught whatsoever, either plant or fig-tree, or vine, yea, or olive, or pear, or garden-bed in all the close, that is not well seen to. Yet another thing will I tell thee and lay not up wrath thereat in thy heart. Thyself art scarce so well cared for, but a pitiful old age is on thee, and withal thou art withered and unkempt, and clad unseemly. It cannot be to punish thy sloth that thy master cares not for thee; there shows nothing of the slave about thy face and stature, for thou art like a kingly man, even like one who should lie soft, when he has washed and eaten well, as is the manner of the aged. But come declare me this and plainly tell it all. Whose thrall art thou, and whose garden dost thou tend? Tell me moreover truly, that I may surely know, if it be indeed to Ithaca that I am now come, as one yonder told me who met with me but now on the way hither. He was but of little understanding, for he deigned not to tell me all nor to heed my saying, when I questioned him concerning my friend, whether indeed he is yet alive or is even now dead and within the house of Hades. For I will declare it and do thou mark and listen: once did I kindly entreat a man in mine own dear country, who came to our home, and never yet has any mortal been dearer of all the strangers that have drawn to my house from afar. He declared him to be by lineage from out of Ithaca, and said that his own father was Laertes son of Arceisius. So I led him to our halls and gave him good entertainment, with all loving-kindness, out of the plenty that was within. Such gifts too I gave him as are the due of guests; of well wrought gold I gave him seven talents, and a mixing bowl of flowered work, all of silver, and twelve cloaks of single fold, and as many coverlets, and as many goodly mantles and doublets to boot, and besides all these, four women skilled in all fair works and most comely, the women of his choice.'

Then his father answered him, weeping: 'Stranger, thou art verily come to that country whereof thou askest, but outrageous men and froward hold it. And these thy gifts, thy countless gifts, thou didst bestow in vain. For if thou hadst found that man yet living in the land of Ithaca he would have sent thee on thy way with good return of thy presents, and with all hospitality, as is due to the man that begins the kindness. But come, declare me this and plainly tell me all; how many years are passed since thou didst entertain him, thy guest ill-fated and my child,—if ever such an one there was,—hapless man, whom far from his friends and his country's soil, the fishes, it may be, have devoured in the deep sea, or on the shore he has fallen the prey of birds and beasts. His mother wept not over him nor clad him for burial, nor his father, we that begat him. Nor did his bride, whom men sought with rich gifts, the constant Penelope, bewail her lord upon the bier, as was meet, nor closed his eyes, as is the due of the departed. Moreover, tell me this truly, that I may surely know, who art thou and whence of the sons of men? Where is thy city and where are they that begat thee? Where now is thy swift ship moored, that brought thee thither with thy godlike company? Hast thou come as a passenger on another's ship, while they set thee ashore and went away?

Then Odysseus of many counsels answered him, saying: 'Yea now, I will tell thee all most plainly. From out of Alybas I come, where I dwell in a house renowned, and am the son of Apheidas the son of Polypemon, the prince, and my own name is Eperitus. But some god drave me wandering hither from Sicania against my will, and yonder my ship is moored toward the upland away from the city. But for Odysseus, this is now the fifth year since he went thence and departed out of my country. Ill-fated was he, and yet he had birds of good omen when he fared away, birds on the right; wherefore I sped him gladly on his road, and gladly he departed, and the heart of us twain hoped yet to meet in friendship on a day and to give splendid gifts.'

So he spake, and on the old man fell a black cloud of sorrow. With both his hands he clutched the dust and ashes and showered them on his grey head, with ceaseless groaning. Then the heart of Odysseus was moved, and up through his nostrils throbbed anon the keen sting of sorrow at the sight of his dear father. And he sprang towards him and fell on his neck and kissed him, saying:

'Behold, I here, even I, my father, am the man of whom thou askest; in the twentieth year am I come to mine own country. But stay thy weeping and tearful lamentation, for I will tell thee all clearly, though great need there is of haste. I have slain the wooers in our halls and avenged their bitter scorn and evil deeds.'

Then Laertes answered him and spake, saying: 'If thou art indeed Odysseus, mine own child, that art come hither, show me now a manifest token, that I may be assured.'

Then Odysseus of many counsels answered him saying: 'Look first on this scar and consider it, that the boar dealt me with his white tusk on Parnassus, whither I had gone, and thou didst send me forth, thou and my lady mother, to Autolycus my mother's father, to get the gifts which when he came hither he promised and covenanted to give me. But come, and I will even tell thee the trees through all the terraced garden, which thou gavest me once for mine own, and I was begging of thee this and that, being but a little child, and following thee through the garden. Through these very trees we were going, and thou didst tell me the names of each of them. Pear-trees thirteen thou gavest me and ten apple-trees and figs two-score, and, as we went, thou didst name the fifty rows of vines thou wouldest give me, whereof each one ripened at divers times, with all manner of clusters on their boughs, when the seasons of Zeus wrought mightily on them from on high.'

So he spake, and straightway his knees were loosened, and his heart melted within him, as he knew the sure tokens that Odysseus showed him. About his dear son he cast his arms, and the steadfast goodly Odysseus caught him fainting to his breast. Now when he had got breath and his spirit came to him again, once more he answered and spake, saying:

'Father Zeus, verily ye gods yet bear sway on high Olympus, if indeed the wooers have paid for their infatuate pride! But now my heart is terribly afraid, lest straightway all the men of Ithaca come up against us here, and haste to send messengers everywhere to the cities of the Cephallenians.'

Then Odysseus of many counsels answered him saying: 'Take courage, and let not thy heart be careful about these matters. But come, let us go to the house that lies near the garden, for thither I sent forward Telemachus and the neatherd and the swineherd to get ready the meal as speedily as may be.'

After these words the twain set out to the goodly halls. Now when they had come to the fair-lying house, they found Telemachus and the neatherd and the swineherd carving much flesh, and mixing the dark wine. Meanwhile the Sicilian handmaid bathed high-hearted Laertes in his house, and anointed him with olive-oil, and cast a fair mantle about him. Then Athene drew nigh, and made greater the limbs of the shepherd of the people, taller she made him than before and mightier to behold. Then he went forth from the bath, and his dear son marvelled at him, beholding him like to the deathless gods in presence. And uttering his voice he spake to him winged words:

'Father, surely one of the gods that are from everlasting hath made thee goodlier and greater to behold.'

Then wise Laertes answered him, saying: 'Ah, would to father Zeus and Athene and Apollo, that such as I was when I took Nericus, the stablished castle on the foreland of the continent, being then the prince of the Cephallenians, would that in such might, and with mail about my shoulders, I had stood to aid thee yesterday in our house, and to beat back the wooers; so should I have loosened the knees of many an one of them in the halls, and thou shouldest have been gladdened in thine inmost heart!'

So they spake each with the other. But when the others had ceased from their task and made ready the feast, they sat down all orderly on chairs and on high seats. Then they began to put forth their hands on the meat, and the old man Dolius drew nigh, and the old man's sons withal came tired from their labour in the fields, for their mother, the aged Sicilian woman, had gone forth and called them, she that saw to their living and diligently cared for the old man, now that old age had laid hold on him. So soon as they looked on Odysseus and took knowledge of him, they stood still in the halls in great amazement. But Odysseus addressed them in gentle words, saying:

'Old man, sit down to meat and do ye forget your marvelling, for long have we been eager to put forth our hands on the food, as we abode in the hall alway expecting your coming.'

So he spake, and Dolius ran straight toward him stretching forth both his hands, and he grasped the hand of Odysseus and kissed it on the wrist, and uttering his voice spake to him winged words:

'Beloved, forasmuch as thou hast come back to us who sore desired thee, and no longer thought to see thee, and the gods have led thee home again;—hail to thee and welcome manifold, and may the gods give thee all good fortune! Moreover tell me this truly, that I may be assured, whether wise Penelope yet knows well that thou hast come back hither, or whether we shall dispatch a messenger.'

Then Odysseus of many counsels answered saying: 'Old man, already she knows all; what need to busy thyself herewith?'

Thereon the other sat him down again on his polished settle. And in like wise the sons of Dolius gathered about the renowned Odysseus, and greeted him well and clasped his hands, and then sat down all orderly by Dolius their father.

So they were busy with the meal in the halls. Now Rumour the messenger went swiftly all about the city, telling the tale of the dire death and fate of the wooers. And the people heard it all at once, and thronged together from every side with sighing and groaning, before the house of Odysseus. And each brought forth his dead from the halls, and buried them; but those that came out of other cities they placed on swift ships, and sent to fisherfolk to carry, each corpse to his own home. As for them they all fared together to the assembly-place, in sorrow of heart. When they were all gathered and come together, Eupeithes arose and spake among them, for a comfortless grief lay heavy on his heart for his son Antinous, the first man that goodly Odysseus had slain. Weeping for him he made harangue and spake among them:

'Friends, a great deed truly hath this man devised against the Achaeans. Some with his ships he led away, many men and noble, and his hollow ships hath he lost, and utterly lost of his company, and others again, and those far the best of the Cephallenians he hath slain on his coming home. Up now, before ever he gets him swiftly either to Pylos or to fair Elis, where the Epeians bear sway, let us go forth; else even hereafter shall we have shame of face for ever. For a scorn this is even for the ears of men unborn to hear, if we avenge not ourselves on the slayers of our sons and of our brethren. Life would no more be sweet to me, but rather would I die straightway and be with the departed. Up, let us be going, lest these fellows be beforehand with us and get them over the sea.'

Thus he spake weeping, and pity fell on all the Achaeans. Then came near to them Medon and the divine minstrel, forth from the halls of Odysseus, for that sleep had let them go. They stood in the midst of the gathering, and amazement seized every man. Then Medon, wise of heart, spake among them, saying:

'Hearken to me now, ye men of Ithaca, for surely Odysseus planned not these deeds without the will of the gods. Nay I myself beheld a god immortal, who stood hard by Odysseus, in the perfect semblance of Mentor; now as a deathless god was he manifest in front of Odysseus, cheering him, and yet again scaring the wooers he stormed through the hall, and they fell thick one on another.'

Thus he spake, and pale fear gat hold of the limbs of all. Then the old man, the lord Halitherses, spake among them, the son of Mastor, for he alone saw before and after. Out of his good will he made harangue and spake among them, saying:

'Hearken to me now, ye men of Ithaca, to the word that I will say. Through your own cowardice, my friends, have these deeds come to pass. For ye obeyed not me, nor Mentor, the shepherd of the people, to make your sons cease from their foolish ways. A great villainy they wrought in their evil infatuation, wasting the wealth and holding in no regard the wife of a prince, while they deemed that he would never more come home. And now let things be on this wise, and obey my counsel. Let us not go forth against him, lest haply some may find a bane of their own bringing.'

So he spake, but they leapt up with a great cry, the more part of them, while the rest abode there together; for his counsel was not to the mind of the more part, but they gave ear to Eupeithes, and swiftly thereafter they rushed for their armour. So when they had arrayed them in shining mail, they assembled together in front of the spacious town. And Eupeithes led them in his witlessness, for he thought to avenge the slaying of his son, yet himself was never to return, but then and there to meet his doom.

Now Athene spake to Zeus, the son of Cronos, saying: 'O Father, our father Cronides, throned in the highest, answer and tell me what is now the hidden counsel of thy heart? Wilt thou yet further rouse up evil war and the terrible din of battle, or art thou minded to set them at one again in friendship?'

Then Zeus, the gatherer of the clouds, answered her saying: 'My child, why dost thou thus straitly question me, and ask me this? Nay didst not thou thyself devise this very thought, namely, that Odysseus should indeed take vengeance on these men at his coming? Do as thou wilt, but I will tell thee of the better way. Now that goodly Odysseus hath wreaked vengeance on the wooers, let them make a firm covenant together with sacrifice, and let him be king all his days, and let us bring about oblivion of the slaying of their children and their brethren; so may both sides love one another as of old, and let peace and wealth abundant be their portion.'

Therewith he roused Athene to yet greater eagerness, and from the peaks of Olympus she came glancing down.

Now when they had put from them the desire of honey-sweet food, the steadfast goodly Odysseus began to speak among them, saying:

'Let one go forth and see, lest the people be already drawing near against us.'

So he spake, and the son of Dolius went forth at his bidding, and stood on the outer threshold and saw them all close at hand. Then straightway he spake to Odysseus winged words:

'Here they be, close upon us! Quick, let us to arms!'

Thereon they rose up and arrayed them in their harness, Odysseus and his men being four, and the six sons of Dolius, and likewise Laertes and Dolius did on their armour, grey-headed as they were, warriors through stress of need. Now when they had clad them in shining mail, they opened the gates and went forth and Odysseus led them.

Then Athene, daughter of Zeus, drew near them in the likeness of Mentor, in fashion and in voice. And the steadfast goodly Odysseus beheld her and was glad, and straightway he spake to Telemachus his dear son:

'Telemachus, soon shalt thou learn this, when thou thyself art got to the place of the battle where the best men try the issue,—namely, not to bring shame on thy father's house, on us who in time past have been eminent for might and hardihood over all the world.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'Thou shalt see me, if thou wilt, dear father, in this my mood no whit disgracing thy line, according to thy word.'

So spake he, and Laertes was glad and spake, saying: 'What a day has dawned for me, kind gods; yea, a glad man am I! My son and my son's son are vying with one another in valour.'

Then grey-eyed Athene stood beside Laertes, and spake to him: 'O son of Arceisius that art far the dearest of all my friends, pray first to the grey-eyed maid and to father Zeus, then swing thy long spear aloft and hurl it straightway.'

Therewith Pallas Athene breathed into him great strength. Then he prayed to the daughter of mighty Zeus, and straightway swung his long spear aloft and hurled it, and smote Eupeithes through his casque with the cheek-piece of bronze. The armour kept not out the spear that went clean through, and he fell with a crash, and his arms rattled about his body. Then Odysseus and his renowned son fell on the fore-fighters, and smote them with swords and two-headed spears. And now would they have slain them all and cut off their return, had not Athene called aloud, the daughter of Zeus lord of the aegis, and stayed all the host of the enemy, saying:

'Hold your hands from fierce fighting, ye men of Ithaca, that so ye may be parted quickly, without bloodshed.'

So spake Athene, and pale fear gat hold of them all. The arms flew from their hands in their terror and fell all upon the ground, as the goddess uttered her voice. To the city they turned their steps, as men fain of life, and the steadfast goodly Odysseus with a terrible cry gathered himself together and hurled in on them, like an eagle of lofty flight. Then in that hour the son of Cronos cast forth a flaming bolt, and it fell at the feet of the grey-eyed goddess, the daughter of the mighty Sire. Then grey-eyed Athene spake to Odysseus, saying:

'Son of Laertes, of the seed of Zeus, Odysseus of many devices, refrain thee now and stay the strife of even-handed war, lest perchance the son of Cronos be angry with thee, even Zeus of the far-borne voice.'

So spake Athene, and he obeyed and was glad at heart. And thereafter Pallas Athene set a covenant between them with sacrifice, she, the daughter of Zeus lord of the aegis, in the likeness of Mentor, both in fashion and in voice.

BATRACHOMYOMACHIA

OR THE

BATTLE OF THE FROGS AND MICE

ATTRIBUTED TO HOMER
BUT PROBABLY BY PIGRES

TRANSLATED BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION UPON

THE EPIC POETS AFTER HOMER

INTRODUCTION

THE EPIC POETS AFTER HOMER

Not only were the great national epics, the Iliad and the Odyssey, popularly ascribed to Homer by the ancients, but also every other antique work describing the exploits of the legendary Greek heroes, even when the names of the true authors were known—just as the Hebrew psalms are even now all popularly attributed to David, despite such names as Asaph borne conspicuously at their heads in all our Bibles. Among these so-called Cyclic Poems may be mentioned the Œchalia, by CREOPHYLUS OF CHIOS, said to have been the son-in-law of Homer, relating the contest of Hercules with Eurytus for the sake of Iole, and the capture of Œchalia; the Cypria, probably by STASINUS, of Cyprus, (B.C. 776) treating of the judgment of Paris, the rape of Helen, and other events immediately preceding and occasioning the Trojan war; two epics generally ascribed to ARCTINUS, of Miletus: the Æthiopis, beginning with the arrival at Troy of the Æthiopian hero Memnon and the Amazons and ending with the death of Achilles, and the Destruction of Troy, relating the story of the capture of the city by the device of the wooden horse; the Little Iliad, by LESCHES, of Mitylene (B.C. 708-676), comprising the fate of Ajax, the exploits of Philoctetes, Neoptolemus, and Odysseus, and the taking of the city—the account of which last event was also known by the name of Arctinus's work, the Destruction of Troy; the Nosti, by AGIAS OF TROEZEN, describing the adventures of the Greeks on their return home from the Trojan war; and the Telegonia, by EUGAMON OF CYRENE (about B.C. 568), a conclusion of the Odyssey, giving an account of events from the fight with the suitors to the death of Odysseus.

All these imitations and completions of the Iliad and Odyssey furnished rich material for the great Athenian dramatists and for the later epic poets such as the Roman Virgil—

indeed, they were more copiously drawn upon for plots and incidents than even the great originals. And it is to these dramas and later epics that modern readers must turn for the stories, for unfortunately the Cyclic Poems have been lost with the exception of a few fragments.

Greek epic poets who wrote of other events than those of the Trojan war are PISANDER, of Rhodes (B.C. 650), who wrote the Heraclea, a work celebrating the exploits of Hercules; an uncle of Herodotus, PANYASIS, of Halicarnassus, (put to death by the tyrant Lygdamis about B.C. 454 for being the leader of the aristocratic party), who wrote a Heraclea also, and an epic entitled Ionica, relating the history of the Ionic colonies; CHŒRILUS OF SAMOS (B.C 470), who wrote the Perseis, the story of the Persian Wars, the first attempt in Greece at an historical epic; and ANTIMACHUS, of Colophon (B.C. 400), who founded the poetry of learning in his long mythical epic Thebais, and in a cycle of elegies named after his own lost Lyde, and telling of famous lovers of former times who had been parted by death.

A school of epic poets sprang up in Alexandria in the third century before Christ, following the learned style of Antimachus. Of this the chief representative was CALLIMACHUS, the curator of the great Alexandrian library, who wrote a very popular epic entitled Hecate, only fragments of which have survived. He was averse, as a rule, to the composition of epics and other long productions, preferring hymns, elegies and other short poems, in which he could devote himself to the artistic elaboration of detail. These were greatly admired, especially by the Romans. Catullus imitated his Lock of Berenice. Callimachus exerted a powerful influence of ancient literature, not only directly through his works, but indirectly through his famous pupils, the savants of his age—Eratosthenes, Aristophanes of Byzantium, and Apollonius of Rhodes being among their number. Altogether Callimachus wrote eight hundred works, in prose and verse, the chief one, perhaps, being Causes, a collection of elegiac poems in four books, treating with great erudition of the foundation of cities, the origin of religious ceremonies, and the like. He also compiled a monumental catalogue of the library called

Tablets. It consisted of 120 books, and listed the works of the library in chronological order, giving observations on their genuineness. This work laid the foundation of Greek literary criticism, in which branch of learning many scholars arose in the succeeding ages. Since their product is not creative literature, they will not be noted in the present work, although the reader is advised that through their writings many valuable remains of creative literature have been preserved. A translation of Callimachus's Hymn to Demeter appears in volume three.

EUPHORION, of Chalcis (born B.C. 276), who became librarian to Antiochus the Great, was also a poet writing many works of an epic nature, as indicated by their titles, such as: Alexander, Arius, Apollodorus, Hesiod, etc. His Mopsopia, or Miscellanies, was a collection in five books of fables and histories relating to Attica. Only fragments of his works remain. He was highly esteemed by Quintilian and Virgil. He was one of those authors whom the emperor Tiberius imitated in his writings, and whose busts he placed in his library. Euphorion was translated into Latin by C. Cornelius Gallus, the friend of Virgil and Ovid, but the translation has been lost.

RHIANUS, of Crete (B.C. 222), another Alexandrian scholar, was also a writer of epics. These have been lost, the only remains of the poet being epigrams.

Another Alexandrian scholar, however, APOLLONIUS OF RHODES (born B.C. 260), wrote an epic that has survived—the Argonautica, an account of the voyage for the Golden Fleece. He was a pupil of the learned and elegant Callimachus, who disapproved of the Homeric simplicity of the poem. This attitude was imitated by other Alexandrians to whom Apollonius recited the epic, whereupon he retired in disgust to Rhodes, where it was received with acclaim, the inhabitants admitting him to citizenship, whence his surname. Returning with these honors to Alexandria, Apollonius recited the poem once more; this time it met with universal applause, and Ptolemy Epiphanes honored him by appointing him librarian. The Romans greatly prized the poem, and it was imitated in Latin by at least two authors, Varro Atacinus and Valerius Flaccus. It has been translated into English prose by E. P. Coleridge and into English verse by Arthur S. Way. One of the episodes in the latter translation appears in the following pages.

During the Christian era many Greek mythical epics were written. QUINTUS CALABER (fourth century A.D.), called SMYRNÆUS, was the author of an epic in fourteen books, intended as a continuation of the Iliad. It has been preserved, but is of little value. NONNUS, of Panopolis in Egypt (fifth century A.D.), was a pagan when he wrote a vast epic in forty-eight books, called the Dionysiaca, or Bassarica. It is the chief source of our knowledge of the Dionysiac cycle of legends. Converted to Christianity he paraphrased the gospel of St. John in hexameters. Both the epic and the paraphrase have been preserved. Nonnus wrote in a highly rhetorical style, full of spirit and displaying true poetic talent. COLLUTHIS, another Egyptian, wrote an epic entitled The Rape of Helen. TRYPHIODORUS (sixth century A.D.) also of Egypt, wrote an Odyssey, and a Capture of Troy, the latter of which has been preserved. It is a very indifferent poem, containing an account of the stratagem of the wooden horse and the sack of the city.

The last epic author, and the one with whom all Greek classic literature may be said to have come to a close, was MUSÆUS, one of the most charming of the world's poets. In the sixth century after Christ he wrote Hero and Leander, the story of the lover who swam the Hellespont each night to visit his beloved. It shows a warmth of passion not found in any of his cold commentaries, and which harks back to Sappho in the distant past, and looks forward to Swinburne in the present. Byron retold the story of the poem in his Bride of Abydos. The best translation is by George Chapman, the Elizabethan dramatist and translator of Homer. It is found in the following pages.

In connection with these authentic epics, two spurious prose histories of the Trojan war may be noted: a Fall of Troy ascribed to DARES, a Trojan priest, mentioned by Homer, and a Diary of the Trojan War, said to have been written by a Cretan, DICTYS by name, who accompanied Idomeneus to the war. These were undoubtedly the compositions of a much later age. Of the history of Dares a so-called Latin translation exists, which was falsely ascribed to Cornelius Nepos, with a dedication to Sallust. The history of Dictys, it was pretended, was discovered in the reign of Nero, in a tomb near Cnossus, which was laid open by an earthquake. It purported to have been written in Phœnician by one Eupraxides, or Eupraxis. There is a pretended Latin version by one C. Septimus, living in the time of Diocletian. These works form the source of a famous mediæval romance of chivalry, the work of Guido delle Colonne, of Messina, a celebrated lawyer and poet of the thirteenth century. The spurious histories falling into his hands, he conceived the idea of shaping them into a romance of the kind popular in his age. By interpolating tournaments and single combats and other knightly actions and adventures, confounding history and mythology, and Greek, Oriental and mediæval European manners, and making his heroes know alchemy and astronomy, and fight with dragons, griffins, and other fabulous monsters, he produced a book that became extraordinarily successful, being translated into almost every European language. From it arose the prevalent desire of the great families of the Middle Ages to claim descent from one of the heroes of Troy, and the labors of monkish genealogists to satisfy the desire.

Besides the Iliad and the Odyssey the specific works that were once ascribed to Homer are the Homeric Hymns to the Gods, Batrachomyomachia (Battle of the Frogs and Mice), Jests, and Margites. The Hymns are rather little epics than lyrics, as will be noted in the Hymn to Mercury, a translation of which by the poet Shelley will be found in volume two of the present work. They were probably intended to be sung by the rhapsodist, or wandering minstrel, as a preliminary tribute to a god whom he desired to look with favor on his recitation of the epic proper. The Jests, including epigrams, are very silly witticisms to the modern taste. The Batrachomyomachia is a mock epic, burlesquing the doughty deeds of heroes of the true epic. PIGRES, of Halicarnassus, who was either the brother or son of Queen Artemisia of Caria, was probably its author. A prose translation by Theodore Buckley is given in the following pages. Pigres is also accredited with the authorship of Margites, a comic poem of considerable repute among the ancients. It told the story of a stupid, bashful fellow (*margos*), who was involved in ridiculous adventures through attempting deeds beyond his abilities. The following fragments of the poem remain:

Many things he knew, but ill he knew them all.
Him the gods had made neither a digger nor a ploughman, nor otherwise wise in aught; but he failed in every art.

BATTLE OF THE FROGS AND MICE

NAMES OF THE DRAMATIS PERSONÆ EXPLAINED

MICE.

Psicharphax, *crumb-filcher.*
Troxartes, *bread-muncher.*
Lichomyle, *lick-meal.*
Pternotroctas, *chaw-bacon.*
Lichopinax, *lick-dish.*
Embasichytros, *pot-stalker.*
Lichenor, *lick-man.*
Troglodytes, *one who runs into holes.*
Artophagus, *bread-eater.*
Tyroglyphus, *cheese-scooper.*
Pternophagus, *bacon-eater.*
Cnissodioctes, *one who follows the steam of the kitchen.*
Sitophagus, *wheat-eater.*
Meridaprax, *one who plunders his share.*

FROGS.

Physignathus, *puff-cheeks.*
Peleus, *the muddy.*
Hydromeduse, *water-queen.*
Hypsiboas, *loud-brawler.*
Pelion, *the muddy.*
Teutæus, *beet-man.*
Polyphonus, *great-talker.*
Limnocharis, *lake-rejoicing.*
Crambophagus, *cabbage-eater.*
Limnisius, *of the lake.*
Calaminthius, *of the reed.*
Hydrocharis, *water-rejoicing.*
Borborocoetes, *lying in the mud.*
Prassophagus, *garlic-eater.*
Pelusius, *the muddy.*
Pelobates, *mud-walking.*
Prassæus, *garlic.*
Craugasides, *croaking.*

On commencing, I first implore the quire of the muses to descend from Helicon into mine heart, for the sake of the song which I now commit to tablets placed upon my knees, a boundless strife, a war-clattering deed of Mars, desiring all men to receive it into their ears—how that the mice went victorious against the frogs, imitating the deeds of the earth-born hero giants, as was the report among men. Now it had such an origin.

Once on a time a thirsting mouse having escaped danger from a weasel, dipped his smooth beard into a lake near at hand, delighting himself with the sweet water. But him a talkative, lake-rejoicing frog beheld, and addressed him thus:

"Stranger, who art thou? Whence comest thou to the shore? And who begat thee? Speak all things truly, lest I catch thee telling falsehoods. For if I perceive thee to be a proper friend, I will lead thee to my dwelling, and will give thee gifts of hospitality, numerous and good. Now I am king Puff-Cheeks, who am honoured throughout the marsh, through all days ruling over the frogs. And Muddy, my sire, of erst gave me birth, mingling in embrace with Water-Queen by the banks of Eridanus. And I perceive that thou too art handsome and valiant above other mice, a sceptre-wielding king, and a warrior in battles. But come, quickly detail thy pedigree."

But him Crumb-Filcher answered and addressed:

"Why askest thou concerning my race, which is well known to all, both men, and gods, and birds of the sky? I am hight Crumb-Filcher, but I am the son of my great-souled sire Bread-Muncher, and my mother indeed is Lick-Meal, daughter of king Chaw-Bacon. But she brought me forth in a hut, and nurtured me with viands, with figs, and nuts, and all sorts of eatables. But how canst thou make me a friend, who am no ways like thee in nature? For thy sustenance is in the waters, but it is my wont to feed upon as many things as are among men. Nor does the short-baked loaf escape me in the well-rounded basket, nor the large flat cake, having plenty of sesame-cheese, nor a slice of ham, nor white-vested tripe, nor cheese newly pressed from sweet milk, nor nice honey-cake, which even the blessed gods long for, nor in short as many things as cooks prepare for the banquets of men, decking the dishes with all kinds of dainties. Never have I fled from the sad cry in war, but going straight forwards to the fight, I have mingled with the foremost combatants. I dread not man, although possessing a mighty frame, but going to his bed, I nibble the tip of his finger, and catch him by the heel, nor does pain attack the man, nor does sweet sleep leave him, when I bite. But there are two creatures alone which I dread very much throughout the whole earth, the hawk and the weasel, who bring great grief upon me, and the lamentable trap, where there is death by stratagem. But above all I dread the weasel, which is excellent in cunning, which even in my hole hunts me out, when taking refuge in my hole. I do not eat radishes, nor cabbages, nor gourds, nor do I feed upon fresh beets, nor parsley, for these are the viands of you who dwell in the marsh."

To this Puff-Cheeks, smiling, answered thus: "O stranger, thou boastest too much of the belly. Among us, also, both in the marsh, and on the land, there are very many wonders to behold. For unto the frogs hath the son of Saturn granted a two-lived sustenance, to leap along the earth, and to hide our bodies beneath the waters, to dwell in houses placed apart in two elements. But if thou art willing to learn these things also, it is easy. Get upon my back, and take hold of me, lest thou perish, so that, rejoicing, thou mayest come to mine home."

Thus then he spake, and presented his back, and he mounted very quickly, putting his hands round his smooth neck, with a nimble leap. And at first he rejoiced, when he beheld the harbours near at hand, delighting himself with the swimming of Puff-Cheecks. But when he was now buried under the purple waves, weeping much, he lamented with too-late repentance, and plucked out his hairs, and drew up his feet to his belly, and his heart palpitated unusually, and he longed to reach the land. And dreadfully he groaned under the pressure of chill fear. But there suddenly appeared a water-serpent, a dreadful sight to both, and raised his neck straight up above the water. Seeing him, Puff-Cheeks dived down, in no wise reflecting what a companion he was about to leave to perish. And he went to the depth of the marsh, and avoided black fate; but he, (the mouse,) immediately he was let go, fell on his back in the water and he cramped up his hands, and perishing, squeaked. Oftentimes indeed he sank beneath the water, and oftentimes again he came to the surface, kicking about, but it was not permitted him to avoid his destiny. First he stretched his tail over the waters, drawing it along like an oar, and, beseeching the gods that he might reach the land, he was washed away by the purple waves. And much he clamoured, and spake such a discourse, and harangued with his voice:

"Not thus did a bull bear the burthen of love on his shoulders, (when he carried Europa through the waves to Crete), as this frog, swimming, hath carried me home on his back, having stretched out his pallid body on the white stream." But his moistened hairs drew a very great weight upon him, and at length, perishing, he spoke such words:

"Thou shalt not escape notice, O Puff-Cheeks, having done these things deceitfully, having cast me shipwrecked from thy body, as from a rock. On the earth, O basest one, thou wast not my better in the pancratium, nor in wrestling, nor the course. But having deluded me, thou hast cast me into the water. God has an avenging eye, who, forsooth, will straightway requite a just punishment and revenge, (with which indeed the army of the mice shall punish thee, nor shalt thou escape.)"

Having spoken thus, he breathed his last in the water, but him Lick-Dish perceived, as he sate upon the soft banks, (and he truly went to the mice, a most swift messenger of his fate,) and he uttered a dreadful cry, and ran and told it to the mice.

But when they heard their companion's fate, bitter wrath entered them all, and they then gave orders to their heralds, at dawn to summon a council to the house of Bread-Muncher, the unhappy sire of Crumb-Filcher, who was floating on his back in the marsh, a lifeless corse, nor was unhappy he any longer near the banks, but was swimming in the middle of the stream. But when they hastening came at dawn, first arose Bread-Muncher, enraged on account of his son, and spoke thus:

"O friends, although I alone among the frogs have suffered many ills, yet evil fate is the appointed destiny of all. But I am now an object of pity, since I have lost three sons. For the first, indeed, a most hateful weasel slew, having snatched him away, catching him outside his hole. But another, in turn, ruthless men brought to his doom, having, by a new art, discovered a wooden engine, which they call a trap, being a destruction to mice. The third was beloved by me and his revered mother—him has Puff-Cheeks suffocated, leading him into the deep. But come, let us be armed, and go forth against them, having equipped our bodies in variegated arms."

Thus having spoken, he persuaded them all to be armed, and them did Mars, who has a care for war, urge on to the fight. First indeed they placed greaves around their shins, having broken off, and deftly worked, green bean shells, which they themselves, coming by night, had devoured. And they had breastplates made of reed-strengthened skins, which, having stripped a weasel, they had skilfully made. But their shield was the boss of a lamp, while their spear was a good long needle, the all-brazen work of Mars. But the helmet on their foreheads was the shell of a nut.

Thus indeed were the mice armed; but when the frogs perceived it, they swam up out of the water, and coming into one place, they assembled a council concerning evil war. But while they were considering whence was the tumult, and what the gathering, a herald came near, bearing a staff in his hands, Pot-Stalker, the son of great-souled Cheese-Scooper, bearing news of the evil report of war, and he spoke thus:

"O frogs, the mice, threatening you, have sent me to bid you be armed for war and battle. For in the water they have seen Crumb-Filcher, whom your king Puff-Cheeks slew. But fight, ye, who among the frogs are most valiant."

Thus having spoken he declared the matter, but the speech of the mice, entering into their ears, disturbed the minds of the haughty frogs. And, as they complained, Puff-Cheeks arose and said:

"O friends, I did not slay the mouse, nor did I behold him perishing. He must needs have been suffocated, playing near the marsh, imitating the swimmings of the frogs, but these most base ones now charge me who am innocent. But come, let us seek counsel, how we may utterly destroy these deceitful mice. Wherefore I will speak, as seems to me to be best. Having arrayed our bodies in arms, let us all make a stand near the furthermost brinks, where the land is precipitous. But when making an ouslaught against us, they come out, having seized them by the helmets, whosoever shall come near against us, let us hurl them straight into the marsh with them. For thus having choked in the waters these creatures who cannot swim, we may here, with a good courage, upraise a trophy over the slain mice."

Thus having spoken, he clad them all in arms. With the leaves of mallows indeed they surrounded their shins, and they had breastplates made from wide, fresh beets, and they had well prepared the leaves of cabbages for shields, and a long sharp reed was fitted to each as a spear, and helmets of light cockle-shells encircled their heads with a defence. And having armed themselves, they stood upon the high banks, brandishing their spears, and were each filled with wrath.

But Jove, having summoned the gods to the starry heaven, and having pointed out the forces of war, and the valiant combatants, both numerous and mighty, and bearing long spears, such an army as comes of the centaurs and giants—smiling pleasantly, he asked, who of the immortals would be allies to the frogs, or to the mice, and addressed Minerva:

"O daughter, goest thou in order to bear aid to the mice? For of a truth they are all continually leaping about thy temple, where they are delighted with the steam and delicacies from the offerings."

Thus spake the son of Saturn, but him Minerva addressed: "O father, never will I come as an assistant to the mice in trouble, since they have done me many ills, having befouled my garlands, and lamps, for the sake of the oil. But this thing, such as they have done, has particularly eaten into my soul, they have nibbled away a garment, which I had worked with mine own toil, of delicate thread, and I wove a delicate web, and they have made holes in it. But the weaver presses me, and demands usury of me, and on this account I am worn out. For having borrowed, I worked it, and have not the wherewithal to pay back. But even thus I shall not be willing to aid the frogs. For neither are they discreet in mind, but yesterday, when I was returning from battle, when I was very tired, and wanted to sleep, they, making a noise, would not suffer me to close my eyes even for a minute, and I lay sleepless with a headache, until the cock crowed. But come, let us gods avoid aiding these, lest some one of us be wounded by a sharp dart, and lest any one be stricken as to his body with a spear or a sword; for they are going to fight hand to hand, even if a god were to come against them, and let us all be amused, beholding the strife from heaven."

Thus then she spoke, and her the other gods all obeyed. But they all at once came together into one place, and two heralds, bearing the portent of war, and then with them gnats, having large trumpets, sounded the dreadful signal of war, and Jove, the son of Saturn, looking down from heaven, thundered a portent of evil war.

Then first Loud-Roarer wounded Lick-Man with his spear, while standing among the foremost combatants, on the belly, in the middle of the liver, and he fell prone, and defiled his tender hairs in the dust. And falling, he gave a crash, and his arms resounded upon him. But after him Hole-Creeper took aim at Mud-Son, and he fixed the sturdy spear in his breast, and black death seized him as he fell, and the soul flew from his limbs. But Beet-Man then slew Pot-Stalker, having smote him to the heart. And Bread-Munch struck Loud-Talker on the belly, and he fell prone, and the soul fled from his limbs. But when Love-Marsh beheld Loud-Talker perishing, he wounded Hole-Creeper with a mill-stone, coming upon him unawares, in the middle of the neck; but him darkness shadowed as to his eyes; but grief possessed Ocimides, and he let fly with a sharp bulrush. But he drew the sword of him who had made the attack upon himself, nor did he draw out the sword, but fell immediately before. But Lick-Man took aim at him with his shining spear, and smote him (nor did he miss) in the liver. But when Cabbage-Eater perceived this, he leaped down the deep banks in flight. But even thus he escaped not in the waters, for he (Lick-Man) smote him, and he fell, nor breathed again, and the marsh was stained with purple gore, and he himself was stretched out near the bank, swelling with the fat intestines round his flank. But he also slew Cheese-Scooper upon the very banks, and Reedy, perceiving Chaw-Bacon, fell into dismay, and leaped into the lake in flight, having cast away his shield. But Love-Water also slew king Chaw-Bacon, having smote him upon the forepart of the head with a stone, and the brain trickled out from his nostrils, and the earth was defiled with gore. But faultless Mud-Bed, slew Litræus, and Lick-Dish killed faultless Mud-Bed, rushing at him with his spear, but darkness veiled him as to his eyes. And Munch-Garlick, perceiving him, dragged Savour-Hunter by the foot, and choked him in the marsh, having seized him by the tendon of his foot. But Crum-Filcher came to the aid of his slain companions, and smote Munch-Garlick on the belly, in the midst of the liver. And he fell before him, and his soul went to Hades-ward. But Mud-Stalker looking on, hurled a handful of mud against him, and befouled his forehead, and within a little blinded him. And he then was enraged, and taking in his sturdy hand a stone which lay on the plain, a heavy burthen of the field, with it smote Mud-Stalker beneath the knees, and the whole of his right shin was broken, and he fell supine in the dust. But Croak-Son came to his aid, and went in turn against him, and smote him in the middle of the belly; and the sharp bulrush went right through him, and on the ground were poured out all his entrails, as the spear was drawn out by the sturdy hand. And Wheat-Eater, as he perceived it on the banks of the river, limping gave back from the fight, and was grievously pained. And he leaped into the ditch, in order that he might escape utter destruction. But Munch-Bread smote Swell-Cheeks on the tip of the foot, and pained, he swiftly leaped into the marsh in flight. But when Munch-Bread perceived him fallen in, yet half-alive, he forthwith ran up, longing to put an end to him. But when Garlick saw him fallen in, yet half-alive, he came through the foremost combatants, and took aim with a sharp bulrush. Nor did he break his shield, for the point of the spear was detained in it. But noble Origanum, imitating Mars himself, smote him on the four-potted blameless helmet, who alone among the frogs fought gallantly in the crowd. And they rushed upon him, but he, when he perceived, awaited not the valiant heroes, but dived beneath the depths of the marsh.

Now among the mice there was a certain young one, surpassing the others, a fighter hand to hand, the beloved son of blameless Bread-Plotter, a general, showing himself a very Mars, valiant Share-Snatcher, who alone among the mice was surpassing in the fight. And he stood beside the marsh, exulting alone, apart from the rest; and he had determined to lay waste the race of warrior-frogs. And he would certainly have accomplished it, since mighty was his strength, had not the father of men and gods quickly perceived. And the son of Saturn then took pity on the perishing frogs, and having moved his head, he uttered such a speech:

"O gods! surely 'tis a great deed I behold with mine eyes. Not a little has Share-Snatcher astounded me, raging to slaughter the frogs in the marsh. But let us with all haste despatch war-clattering Pallas, and Mars, who many restrain him from the fight, although being valiant."

Thus indeed spake the son of Saturn, but Mars replied in words: "Neither the might of Minerva, nor indeed of Mars, will be able to avert utter destruction from the frogs. But come, let us all go as assistants, or let thy mighty weapon, Titan-slaying, of mighty deeds, be moved, the weapon by which thou didst slay far the best of all the Titans, with which too thou didst once slay Capaneus, a mighty hero, and didst chain down Enceladus, and the wild tribe of giants, let it be moved, for thus will he be taken, whoever is best."

Thus indeed he spoke, and the son of Saturn hurled his smouldering bolt. First indeed he thundered, and shook mighty Olympus, and then, brandishing, he sent his dreadful bolt, the weapon of Jove, and it flew down from the hand of the king. Having hurled it, he terrified all both frogs and mice. But not even thus did the army of the mice rest, but still the more desired to lay waste the race of warrior frogs; unless the son of Saturn had compassionated the frogs, looking down from Olympus, who indeed then forthwith sent allies to the frogs. And they came anvil-backed, curve-clawed, sidelong in gait, squinting, their mouths armed with pincers, shell-clad, bony, wide-backed, shining on the shoulders, crook-kneed, with outstretched hands, having sight in their breasts, eight-footed, two-headed, not to be handled, and they are called Crabs, who indeed with their mouths clipped off the tails, and feet, and hands of the mice, and their spears were bent. These too the timid mice dreaded, nor awaited them; but they turned to flight, and the sun now set, and the end of the war was brought to pass in one day.

HYMNS

ASCRIBED TO HOMER

TRANSLATED BY

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

THE HOMERIC HYMNS

HYMN TO MERCURY

I

Sing, Muse, the son of Maia and of Jove,
    The Herald-child, king of Arcadia
And all its pastoral hills, whom in sweet love
    Having been interwoven, modest May
Bore Heaven's dread Supreme—an antique grove
    Shadowed the cavern where the lovers lay
In the deep night, unseen by Gods or Men,
And white-armed Juno slumbered sweetly then.

II

Now, when the joy of Jove had its fulfilling,
    And Heaven's tenth moon chronicled her relief,
She gave to light a babe all babes excelling,
    A schemer subtle beyond all belief;
A shepherd of thin dreams, a cow-stealing,
    A night-watching, and door-waylaying thief,
Who 'mongst the Gods was soon about to thieve,
And other glorious actions to achieve.

III

The babe was born at the first peep of day;
    He began playing on the lyre at noon,
And the same evening did he steal away
    Apollo's herds;—the fourth day of the moon
On which him bore the venerable May,
    From her immortal limbs he leaped full soon,
Nor long could in the sacred cradle keep,
But out to seek Apollo's herds would creep.

IV

Out of the lofty cavern wandering
    He found a tortoise, and cried out—"A treasure!"
(For Mercury first made the tortoise sing)
    The beast before the portal at his leisure
The flowery herbage was depasturing,
    Moving his feet in a deliberate measure
Over the turf. Jove's profitable son
Eyeing him laughed, and laughing thus begun:—

V

"A useful god-send are you to me now,
    King of the dance, companion of the feast,
Lovely in all your nature! Welcome, you
    Excellent plaything! Where, sweet mountain beast,
Got you that speckled shell? Thus much I know,
    You must come home with me and be my guest;
You will give joy to me, and I will do
All that is in my power to honour you.

VI

"Better to be at home than out of door;—
    So come with me, and though it has been said
That you alive defend from magic power,
    I know you will sing sweetly when you're dead."
Thus having spoken, the quaint infant bore,
    Lifting it from the grass on which it fed,
And grasping it in his delighted hold,
His treasured prize into the cavern old.

VII

Then scooping with a chisel of gray steel,
    He bored the life and soul out of the beast—
Not swifter a swift thought of woe or weal
    Darts through the tumult of a human breast
Which thronging cares annoy—not swifter wheel
    The flashes of its torture and unrest
Out of the dizzy eyes—than Maia's son
All that he did devise hath featly done.

VIII

And through the tortoise's hard stony skin
At proper distances small holes he made,
And fastened the cut stems of reeds within,
And with a piece of leather overlaid
The open space and fixed the cubits in,
Fitting the bridge to both, and stretched o'er all
Symphonious cords of sheep-gut rythmical.

IX

When he had wrought the lovely instrument,
He tried the chords, and made division meet
Preluding with the plectrum, and there went
Up from beneath his hand a tumult sweet
Of mighty sounds, and from his lips he sent
A strain of unpremeditated wit
Joyous and wild and wanton—such you may
Hear among revellers on a holiday.

X

He sung how Jove and May of the bright sandal
Dallied in love not quite legitimate;
And his own birth, still scoffing at the scandal,
And naming his own name, did celebrate;
His mother's cave and servant maids he planned all
In Plastic verse, her household stuff and state,
Perennial pot, trippet, and brazen pan,—
But singing, he conceived another plan.

XI

Seized with a sudden fancy for fresh meat,
He in his sacred crib deposited
The hollow lyre, and from the cavern sweet
Rushed with great leaps up to the mountain's head,
Revolving in his mind some subtle feat
Of thievish craft, such as a swindler might
Devise in the lone season of dun night.

XII

Lo! the great Sun under the ocean's bed has
  Driven steeds and chariot—the child meanwhile strode
O'er the Pierian mountains clothed in shadows,
  Where the immortal oxen of the God
Are pastured in the flowering unmown meadows,
  And safely stalled in a remote abode—
The archer Argicide, elate and proud,
Drove fifty from the herd, lowing aloud.

XIII

He drove them wandering o'er the sandy way,
  But, being ever mindful of his craft,
Backward and forward drove he them astray,
  So that the tracks which seemed before, were aft;
His sandals then he threw to the ocean spray,
  And for each foot he wrought a kind of raft
Of tamarisk, and tamarisk-like sprigs,
And bound them in a lump with withy twigs.

XIV

  And on his feet he tied these sandals light,
The trail of whose wide leaves might not betray
  His track; and then, a self-sufficing wight,
Like a man hastening on some distant way,
  He from Pieria's mountain bent his flight;
But an old man perceived the infant pass
Down green Onchestus heaped like beds with grass.

XV

The old man stood dressing his sunny vine:
  "Halloo! old fellow with the crookèd shoulder!
You grub those stumps? before they will bear wine
  Methinks even you must grow a little older:
Attend, I pray, to this advice of mine,
  As you would 'scape what might appal a bolder—
Seeing, see not—and hearing, hear not—and—
If you have understanding—understand."

XVI

So saying, Hermes roused the oxen vast;
O'er shadowy mountain and resounding dell,
And flower-paven plains, great Hermes past;
Till the black night divine, which favouring fell
Around his steps, grew gray, and morning fast
Wakened the world to work, and from her cell
Sea-strewn, the Pallantean Moon sublime
Into her watch-tower just began to climb.

XVII

Now to Alpheus he had driven all
The broad-foreheaded oxen of the Sun;
They came unwearied to the lofty stall
And to the water troughs which ever run
Through the fresh fields—and when with rushgrass tall,
Lotus and all sweet herbage, every one
Had pastured been, the great God made them move
Towards the stall in a collected drove.

XVIII

A mighty pile of wood the God then heaped,
And having soon conceived the mystery
Of fire, from two smooth laurel branches stript
The bark, and rubbed them in his palms,—on high
Suddenly forth the burning vapour leapt,
And the divine child saw delightedly—
Mercury first found out for human weal
Tinder-box, matches, fire-irons, flint and steel.

XIX

And fine dry logs and roots innumerous
He gathered in a delve upon the ground—
And kindled them—and instantaneous
The strength of the fierce flame was breathed around:
And whilst the might of glorious Vulcan thus
Wrapt the great pile with glare and roaring sound,
Hermes dragged forth two heifers, lowing loud,
Close to the fire—such might was in the God.

XX

And on the earth upon their backs he threw
The panting beasts, and rolled them o'er and o'er,
And bored their lives out. Without more ado
He cut up fat and flesh, and down before
The fire, on spits of wood he placed the two,
Toasting their flesh and ribs, and all the gore
Pursed in the bowels; and while this was done
He stretched their hides over a craggy stone.

XXI

We mortals let an ox grow old, and then
Cut it up after long consideration,—
But joyous-minded Hermes from the glen
Drew the fat spoils to the more open station
Of a flat smooth space, and portioned them; and when
He had by lot assigned to each a ration
Of the twelve Gods, his mind became aware
Of all the joys which in religion are.

XXII

For the sweet savour of the roasted meat
Tempted him though immortal. Nathelesse
He checked his haughty will and did not eat,
Though what it cost him words can scarce express,
And every wish to put such morsels sweet
Down his most sacred throat, he did repress;
But soon within the lofty portalled stall
He placed the fat and flesh and bones and all.

XXIII

And every trace of the fresh butchery
And cooking, the God soon made disappear,
As if it all had vanished through the sky;
He burned the hoofs and horns and head and hair,
The insatiate fire devoured them hungrily;—
And when he saw that everything was clear,
He quenched the coals and trampled the black dust,
And in the stream his bloody sandals tossed.

XXIV

All night he worked in the serene moonshine—
But when the light of day was spread abroad
He sought his natal mountain-peaks divine.
On his long wandering, neither man nor god
Had met him, since he killed Apollo's kine,
Nor house-dog had barked at him on his road;
Now he obliquely through the keyhole past,
Like a thin mist, or an autumnal blast.

XXV

Right through the temple of the spacious cave
He went with soft light feet—as if his tread
Fell not on earth; no sound their falling gave;
Then to his cradle he crept quick, and spread
The swaddling-clothes about him; and the knave
Lay playing with the covering of the bed
With his left hand about his knees—the right
Held his belovèd tortoise-lyre tight.

XXVI

There he lay innocent as a new-born child,
As gossips say; but though he was a god,
The goddess, his fair mother, unbeguiled
Knew all that he had done being abroad:
"Whence come you, and from what adventure wild,
You cunning rogue, and where have you abode
All the long night, clothed in your impudence?
What have you done since you departed hence?

XXVII

"Apollo soon will pass within this gate
And bind your tender body in a chain
Inextricably tight, and fast as fate,
Unless you can delude the God again,
Even when within his arms—ah, runagate!
A pretty torment both for gods and men
Your father made when he made you!"—"Dear mother,"
Replied sly Hermes, "Wherefore scold and bother?

XXVIII

"As if I were like other babes as old,
And understood nothing of what is what;
And cared at all to hear my mother scold.
I in my subtle brain a scheme have got,
Which whilst the sacred stars round Heaven are rolled
Will profit you and me—nor shall our lot
Be as you counsel, without gifts or food,
To spend our lives in this obscure abode.

XXIX

"But we will leave this shadow-peopled cave
And live among the Gods, and pass each day
In high communion, sharing what they have
Of profuse wealth and unexhausted prey;
And from the portion which my father gave
To Phœbus, I will snatch my share away,
Which if my father will not—nathelesse I,
Who am the king of robbers, can but try.

XXX

"And, if Latona's son should find me out,
I'll countermine him by a deeper plan;
I'll pierce the Pythian temple-walls, though stout,
And sack the fane of every thing I can—
Cauldrons and tripods of great worth no doubt,
Each golden cup and polished brazen pan,
All the wrought tapestries and garments gay."—
So they together talked;—meanwhile the Day

XXXI

Ethereal born arose out of the flood
Of flowing Ocean, bearing light to men.
Apollo past toward the sacred wood,
Which from the inmost depths of its green glen
Echoes the voice of Neptune,—and there stood
On the same spot in green Onchestus then
That same old animal, the vine-dresser,
Who was employed hedging his vineyard there.

XXXII

Latona's glorious Son began:—"I pray
Tell, ancient hedger of Onchestus green,
Whether a drove of kine has past this way,
All heifers with crooked horns? for they have been
Stolen from the herd in high Pieria,
Where a black bull was fed apart, between
Two woody mountains in a neighbouring glen,
And four fierce dogs watched there, unanimous as men.

XXXIII

"And what is strange, the author of this theft
Has stolen the fatted heifers every one,
But the four dogs and the black bull are left:—
Stolen they were last night at set of sun,
Of their soft beds and their sweet food bereft—
Now tell me, man born ere the world begun,
Have you seen any one pass with the cows?"—
To whom the man of overhanging brows:

XXXIV

"My friend, it would require no common skill
Justly to speak of everything I see:
On various purposes of good or ill
Many pass by my vineyard,—and to me
'Tis difficult to know the invisible
Thoughts, which in all those many minds may be:—
Thus much alone I certainly can say,
I tilled these vines till the decline of day,

XXXV

"And then I thought I saw, but dare not speak
With certainty of such a wondrous thing,
A child, who could not have been born a week,
Those fair-horned cattle closely following,
And in his hand he held a polished stick:
And, as on purpose, he walked wavering
From one side to the other of the road,
And with his face opposed the steps he trod."

XXXVI

Apollo hearing this, past quickly on—
No wingèd omen could have shown more clear
That the deceiver was his father's son.
So the God wraps a purple atmosphere
Around his shoulders, and like fire is gone
To famous Pylos, seeking his kine there,
And found their track and his, yet hardly cold,
And cried—"What wonder do mine eyes behold!

XXXVII

" Here are the footsteps of the hornèd herd
Turned back towards their fields of asphodel;—
But these! are not the tracks of beast or bird,
Gray wolf, or bear, or lion of the dell,
Or manèd Centaur—sand was never stirred
By man or woman thus! Inexplicable!
Who with unwearied feet could e'er impress
The sand with such enormous vestiges?

XXXVIII

" That was most strange—but this is stranger still!"
Thus having said, Phœbus impetuously
Sought high Cyllene's forest-cinctured hill,
And the deep cavern where dark shadows lie,
And where the ambrosial nymph with happy will
Bore the Saturnian's love-child, Mercury—
And a delightful odour from the dew
Of the hill pastures, at his coming, flew.

XXXIX

And Phœbus stooped under the craggy roof
Arched over the dark cavern:—Maia's child
Perceived that he came angry, far aloof,
About the cows of which he had been beguiled,
And over him the fine and fragrant woof
Of his ambrosial swaddling clothes he piled—
As among fire-brands lies a burning spark
Covered, beneath the ashes cold and dark.

XL

There, like an infant who had sucked his fill
And now was newly washed and put to bed,
Awake, but courting sleep with weary will,
And gathered in a lump, hands, feet, and head,
He lay, and his belovèd tortoise still
He grasped and held under his shoulder-blade.
Phœbus the lovely mountain-goddess knew,
Not less her subtle, swindling baby, who

XLI

Lay swathed in his sly wiles. Round every crook
Of the ample cavern, for his kine, Apollo
Looked sharp; and when he saw them not, he took
The glittering key, and opened three great hollow
Recesses in the rock—where many a nook
Was filled with the sweet food immortals swallow,
And mighty heaps of silver and of gold
Were piled within—a wonder to behold!

XLII

And white and silver robes, all overwrought
With cunning workmanship of tracery sweet—
Except among the Gods there can be nought
In the wide world to be compared with it.
Latona's offspring, after having sought
His herds in every corner, thus did greet
Great Hermes:—" Little cradled rogue, declare
Of my illustrious heifers, where they are!

XLIII

" Speak quickly! or a quarrel between us
Must rise, and the event will be, that I
Shall hurl you into dismal Tartarus,
In fiery gloom to dwell eternally;
Nor shall your father nor your mother loose
The bars of that black dungeon—utterly
You shall be cast out from the light of day,
To rule the ghosts of men, unblest as they."

XLIV

To whom thus Hermes slily answered:—“ Son
    Of great Latona, what a speech is this!
Why come you here to ask me what is done
    With the wild oxen which it seems you miss?
I have not seen them, nor from any one
    Have heard a word of the whole business;
If you should promise an immense reward,
I could not tell more than you now have heard.

XLV

“ An ox-stealer should be both tall and strong,
    And I am but a little new-born thing,
Who, yet at least, can think of nothing wrong:
    My business is to suck, and sleep, and fling
The cradle-clothes about me all day long,—
    Or half asleep, hear my sweet mother sing,
And to be washed in water clean and warm,
And hushed and kissed and kept secure from harm.

XLVI

“ O, let not e'er this quarrel be averred!
    The astounded Gods would laugh at you, if e'er
You should allege a story so absurd,
    As that a new-born infant forth could fare
Out of his home after a savage herd.
    I was born yesterday—my small feet are
Too tender for the roads so hard and rough:—
And if you think that this is not enough,

XLVII

“ I swear a great oath, by my father's head,
    That I stole not your cows, and that I know
Of no one else, who might, or could, or did.—
    Whatever things cows are, I do not know,
For I have only heard the name.”—This said,
    He winked as fast as could be, and his brow
Was wrinkled, and a whistle loud gave he,
Like one who hears some strange absurdity.

XLVIII

Apollo gently smiled and said:—"Ay, ay,—
    You cunning little rascal, you will bore
Many a rich man's house, and your array
    Of thieves will lay their siege before his door,
Silent as night, in night; and many a day
    In the wild glens rough shepherds will deplore
That you or yours, having an appetite,
Met with their cattle, comrade of the night!

XLIX

"And this among the Gods shall be your gift,
    To be considered as the lord of those
Who swindle, house-break, sheep-steal, and shop-lift:—
    But now if you would not your last sleep doze;
Crawl out!"—Thus saying, Phœbus did uplift
    The subtle infant in his swaddling clothes,
And in his arms, according to his wont,
A scheme devised the illustrious Argiphont.

L

And sneezed and shuddered—Phœbus on the grass
    Him threw, and whilst all that he had designed
He did perform—eager although to pass,
    Apollo darted from his mighty mind
Towards the subtle babe the following scoff:—
"Do not imagine this will get you off,

LI

"You little swaddled child of Jove and May!"
    And seized him:—"By this omen I shall trace
My noble herds, and you shall lead the way."—
    Cyllenian Hermes from the grassy place,
Like one in earnest haste to get away,
    Rose, and with hands lifted towards his face
Round both his ears—up from his shoulders drew
His swaddling clothes, and—"What mean you to do

LII

"With me, you unkind God?"—said Mercury:
  "Is it about these cows you tease me so?
I wish the race of cows were perished!—I
  Stole not your cows—I do not even know
What things cows are. Alas! I well may sigh,
  That since I came into this world of woe,
I should have ever heard the name of one—
But I appeal to the Saturnian's throne."

LIII

Thus Phœbus and the vagrant Mercury
  Talked without coming to an explanation,
With adverse purpose. As for Phœbus, he
  Sought not revenge, but only information,
And Hermes tried with lies and roguery
  To cheat Apollo.—But when no evasion
Served—for the cunning one his match had found—
He paced on first over the sandy ground.

LIV

  He of the Silver Bow the child of Jove
Followed behind, till to their heavenly Sire
  Came both his children—beautiful as Love,
And from his equal balance did require
  A judgment in the cause wherein they strove.
O'er odorous Olympus and its snows
A murmuring tumult as they came arose,—

LV

And from the folded depths of the great Hill,
  While Hermes and Apollo reverent stood
Before Jove's throne, the indestructible
  Immortals rushed in mighty multitude;
And whilst their seats in order due they fill,
  The lofty Thunderer in a careless mood
To Phœbus said:—"Whence drive you this sweet prey,
This herald-baby, born but yesterday?—

LVI

"A most important subject, trifler, this
To lay before the Gods!"—" Nay, father, nay,
When you have understood the business,
Say not that I alone am fond of prey.
I found this little boy in a recess
Under Cyllene's mountains far away—
A manifest and most apparent thief,
A scandalmonger beyond all belief.

LVII

" I never saw his like either in heaven
Or upon earth for knavery or craft:—
Out of the field my cattle yester-even,
By the low shore on which the loud sea laughed
He right down to the river-ford had driven;
And mere astonishment would make you daft
To see the double kind of footsteps strange
He has impressed wherever he did range.

LVIII

" The cattle's track on the black dust, full well
Is evident, as if they went towards
The place from which they came—that asphodel
Meadow, in which I feed my many herds,—
His steps were most incomprehensible—
I know not how I can describe in words
Those tracks—he could have gone along the sands
Neither upon his feet nor on his hands;—

LIX

" He must have had some other stranger mode
Of moving on: those vestiges immense,
Far as I traced them on the sandy road,
Seemed like the trail of oak-toppings:—but thence
No mark nor track denoting where they trod
The hard ground gave:—but, working at his fence,
A mortal hedger saw him as he past
To Pylos, with the cows, in fiery haste.

LX

"I found that in the dark he quietly
  Had sacrificed some cows, and before light
Had thrown the ashes all dispersedly
  About the road—then, still as gloomy night,
Had crept into his cradle, either eye
  Rubbing, and cogitating some new sleight.
No eagle could have seen him as he lay
Hid in his cavern from the peering day.

LXI

"I taxed him with the fact, when he averred
  Most solemnly that he did neither see
Nor even had in any manner heard
  Of my lost cows, whatever things cows be;
Nor could he tell, though offered a reward,
  Not even who could tell of them to me."
So speaking, Phœbus sate; and Hermes then
Addressed the Supreme Lord of Gods and Men:—

LXII

"Great Father, you know clearly beforehand
  That all which I shall say to you is sooth;
I am a most veracious person, and
  Totally unacquainted with untruth.
At sunrise, Phœbus came, but with no band
  Of Gods to bear him witness, in great wrath,
To my abode, seeking his heifers there,
And saying that I must show him where they are,

LXIII

"Or he would hurl me down the dark abyss.
  I know that every Apollonian limb
Is clothed with speed and might and manliness,
  As a green bank with flowers—but unlike him
I was born yesterday, and you may guess
  He well knew this when he indulged the whim
Of bullying a poor little new-born thing
That slept, and never thought of cow-driving.

LXIV

"Am I like a strong fellow who steals kine?
Believe me, dearest Father, such you are,
This driving of the herds is none of mine;
Across my threshold did I wander ne'er,
So may I thrive! I reverence the divine
Sun and the Gods, and I love you, and care
Even for this hard accuser—who must know
I am as innocent as they or you.

LXV

"I swear by these most gloriously-wrought portals—
(It is, you will allow, an oath of might)
Through which the multitude of the Immortals
Pass and repass for ever, day and night,
Devising schemes for the affairs of mortals—
That I am guiltless; and I will requite,
Although mine enemy be great and strong,
His cruel threat—do thou defend the young!"

LXVI

So speaking, the Cyllenian Argiphont
Winked, as if now his adversary was fitted:—
And Jupiter according to his wont,
Laughed heartily to hear the subtle-witted
Infant give such a plausible account,
And every word a lie. But he remitted
Judgment at present—and his exhortation
Was, to compose the affair by arbitration.

LXVII

And they by mighty Jupiter were bidden
To go forth with a single purpose both,
Neither the other chiding nor yet chidden:
And Mercury with innocence and truth
To lead the way, and show where he had hidden
The mighty heifers.—Hermes, nothing loth,
Obeyed the Ægis-bearer's will—for he
Is able to persuade all easily.

LXVIII

These lovely children of Heaven's highest Lord
Hastened to Pylos and the pastures wide
And the lofty stalls by the Alphean ford,
Where wealth in the mute night is multiplied
With silent growth. Whilst Hermes drove the herd
Out of the stony cavern, Phœbus spied
The hides of those the little babe had slain,
Stretched on the precipice above the plain.

LXIX

"How was it possible," then Phœbus said,
"That you, a little child, born yesterday,
A thing on mother's milk and kisses fed,
Could two prodigious heifers ever flay?
Even I myself may well hereafter dread
Your prowess, offspring of Cyllenian May,
When you grow strong and tall."—He spoke, and bound
Stiff withy bands the infant's wrists around.

LXX

He might as well have bound the oxen wild;
The withy bands, though starkly interknit,
Fell at the feet of the immortal child,
Loosened by some device of his quick wit.
Phœbus perceived himself again beguiled,
And stared—while Hermes sought some hole or pit,
Looking askance and winking fast as thought,
Where he might hide himself and not be caught.

LXXI

Sudden he changed his plan, and with strange skill
Subdued the strong Latonian, by the might
Of winning music, to his mightier will;
His left hand held the lyre, and in his right
The plectrum struck the chords—unconquerable
Up from beneath his hand in circling flight
The gathering music rose—and sweet as Love
The penetrating notes did live and move

LXXII

Within the heart of great Apollo—he
  Listened with all his soul, and laughed for pleasure.
Close to his side stood harping fearlessly
  The unabashèd boy; and to the measure
Of the sweet lyre, there followed loud and free
  His joyous voice; for he unlocked the treasure
Of his deep song, illustrating the birth
Of the bright Gods, and the dark desert Earth:

LXXIII

And how to the Immortals every one
  A portion was assigned of all that is;
But chief Mnemosyne did Maia's son
  Clothe in the light of his loud melodies;—
And as each God was born or had begun
  He in their order due and fit degrees
Sung of his birth and being—and did move
Apollo to unutterable love.

LXXIV

These words were wingèd with his swift delight:
  "You heifer-stealing schemer, well do you
Deserve that fifty oxen should requite
  Such minstrelsies as I have heard even now.
Comrade of feasts, little contriving wight,
  One of your secrets I would gladly know,
Whether the glorious power you now show forth
Was folded up within you at your birth,

LXXV

"Or whether mortal taught or God inspired
  The power of unpremeditated song?
Many divinest sounds have I admired,
  The Olympian Gods and mortal men among;
But such a strain of wondrous, strange, untired,
  And soul-awakening music, sweet and strong,
Yet did I never hear except from thee,
Offspring of May, impostor Mercury!

LXXVI

"What Muse, what skill, what unimagined use,
What exercise of subtlest art, has given
Thy songs such power?—for those who hear may choose
From three, the choicest of the gifts of Heaven,
Delight, and love, and sleep,—sweet sleep, whose dews
Are sweeter than the balmy tears of even:—
And I, who speak this praise, am that Apollo
Whom the Olympian Muses ever follow:

LXXVII

"And their delight is dance, and the blithe noise
Of song and overflowing poesy;
And sweet, even as desire, the liquid voice
Of pipes, that fills the clear air thrillingly;
But never did my inmost soul rejoice
In this dear work of youthful revelry
As now. I wonder at thee, son of Jove;
Thy harpings and thy song are soft as love.

LXXVIII

"Now since thou hast, although so very small,
Science of arts so glorious, thus I swear,
And let this cornel javelin, keen and tall,
Witness between us what I promise here,—
That I will lead thee to the Olympian Hall,
Honoured and mighty, with thy mother dear,
And many glorious gifts in joy will give thee,
And even at the end will ne'er deceive thee."

LXXIX

To whom thus Mercury with prudent speech:—
"Wisely has thou inquirèd of my skill:
I envy thee no thing I know to teach
Even this day:—for both in word and will
I would be gentle with thee; thou canst reach
All things in thy wise spirit, and thy sill
Is highest in heaven among the sons of Jove,
Who loves thee in the fulness of his love.

LXXX

"The Counsellor Supreme has given to thee
Divinest gifts, out of the amplitude
Of his profuse exhaustless treasury;
By thee, 'tis said, the depths are understood
Of his far voice; by thee the mystery
Of all oracular fates,—and the dread mood
Of the diviner is breathed up, even I—
A child—perceive thy might and majesty—

LXXXI

"Thou canst seek out and compass all that wit
Can find or teach;—yet since thou wilt, come take
The lyre—be mine the glory giving it—
Strike the sweet chords, and sing aloud, and wake
Thy joyous pleasure out of many a fit
Of trancèd sound—and with fleet fingers make
Thy liquid-voicèd comrade talk with thee,—
It can talk measured music eloquently.

LXXXII

"Then bear it boldly to the revel loud,
Love-wakening dance, or feast of solemn state,
A joy by night or day—for those endowed
With art and wisdom who interrogate
It teaches, babbling in delightful mood
All things which make the spirit most elate,
Soothing the mind with sweet familiar play,
Chasing the heavy shadows of dismay.

LXXXIII

"To those who are unskilled in its sweet tongue,
Though they should question most impetuously
Its hidden soul, it gossips something wrong—
Some senseless and impertinent reply.
But thou who art as wise as thou art strong
Canst compass all that thou desirest. I
Present thee with this music-flowing shell,
Knowing thou canst interrogate it well.

LXXXIV

"And let us two henceforth together feed
On this green mountain slope and pastoral plain,
The herds in litigation—they will breed
Quickly enough to recompense pain,
If to the bulls and cows we take good heed;—
And thou, though somewhat over fond of gain,
Grudge me not half the profit."—Having spoke,
The shell he proffered, and Apollo took.

LXXXV

And gave him in return the glittering lash,
Installing him as herdsman;—from the look
Of Mercury then laughed a joyous flash,
And then Apollo with the plectrum strook
The chords, and from beneath his hands a crash
Of mighty sounds rushed up, whose music shook
The soul with sweetness, and like an adept
His sweeter voice a just accordance kept.

LXXXVI

The herd went wandering o'er the divine mead,
Whilst these most beautiful Sons of Jupiter
Won their swift way up to the snowy head
Of white Olympus, with the joyous lyre
Soothing their journey; and their father dread
Gathered them both into familiar
Affection sweet,—and then, and now, and ever,
Hermes must love Him of the Golden Quiver,

LXXXVII

To whom he gave the lyre that sweetly sounded,
Which skilfully he held and played thereon.
He piped the while, and far and wide rebounded
The echo of his pipings; every one
Of the Olympians sat with joy astounded,
While he conceived another piece of fun,
One of his old tricks—which the God of Day
Perceiving, said:—" I fear thee, Son of May;—

LXXXVIII

"I fear thee and thy sly chameleon spirit,
Lest thou should steal my lyre and crookèd bow;
This glory and power thou dost from Jove inherit,
To teach all craft upon the earth below;
Thieves love and worship thee—it is thy merit
To make all mortal business ebb and flow
By roguery:—now, Hermes, if you dare,
By sacred Styx a mighty oath to swear

LXXXIX

"That you will never rob me, you will do
A thing extremely pleasing to my heart."
Then Mercury sware by the Stygian dew,
That he would never steal his bow or dart,
Or lay his hands on what to him was due,
Or ever would employ his powerful art
Against his Pythian fane. Then Phœbus swore
There was no God or man whom he loved more.

XC

"And I will give thee as a good-will token,
The beautiful wand of wealth and happiness;
A perfect three-leaved rod of gold unbroken,
Whose magic will thy footsteps ever bless;
And whatsoever by Jove's voice is spoken
Of earthy or divine from its recess,
It, like a loving soul to thee will speak,
And more than this, do thou forbear to seek.

XCI

"For, dearest child, the divinations high
Which thou requirest, 'tis unlawful ever
That thou, or any other deity
Should understand—and vain were the endeavour;
For they are hidden in Jove's mind, and I
In trust of them, have sworn that I would never
Betray the counsels of Jove's inmost will
To any God—the oath was terrible.

XCII

"Then, golden-wanded brother, ask me not
To speak the fates by Jupiter designed;
But be it mine to tell their various lot
To the unnumbered tribes of human kind.
Let good to these, and ill to those be wrought
As I dispense—but he who comes consigned
By voice and wings of perfect augury
To my great shrine, shall find avail in me.

XCIII

"Him will I not deceive, but will assist;
But he who comes relying on such birds
As chatter vainly, who would strain and twist
The purpose of the Gods with idle words,
And deems their knowledge light, he shall have missed
His road—whilst I among my other hoards
His gifts deposit. Yet, O son of May,
I have another wondrous thing to say.

XCIV

"There are three Fates, three virgin Sisters, who
Rejoicing in their wind-outspeeding wings,
Their heads with flour snowed over white and new,
Sit in a vale round which Parnassus flings
Its circling skirts—from these I have learned true
Vaticinations of remotest things.
My father cared not. Whilst they search out dooms,
They sit apart and feed on honeycombs.

XCV

"They, having eaten the fresh honey, grow
Drunk with divine enthusiasm, and utter
With earnest willingness the truth they know;
But if deprived of that sweet food, they mutter
All plausible delusions;—these to you
I give;—if you inquire, they will not stutter;
Delight your own soul with them:—any man
You would instruct may profit if he can.

XCVI

"Take these and the fierce oxen, Maia's child—
O'er many a horse and toil-enduring mule,
O'er jaggèd-jawèd lions, and the wild
White-tuskèd boars, o'er all, by field or pool,
Of cattle which the mighty Mother mild
Nourishes in her bosom, thou shalt rule—
Thou dost alone the veil from death uplift—
Thou givest not—yet this is a great gift."

XCVII

Thus King Apollo loved the child of May
In truth, and Jove covered their love with joy,
Hermes with Gods and men even from that day
Mingled, and wrought the latter much annoy,
And little profit, going far astray
Through the dun night. Farewell, delightful Boy,
Of Jove and Maia sprung,—never by me,
Nor thou, nor other songs, shall unremembered be.

HYMN TO CASTOR AND POLLUX

Ye wild-eyed Muses, sing the Twins of Jove,
Whom the fair-ankled Leda mixed in love
With mighty Saturn's heaven-obscuring Child,
On Taygetus, that lofty mountain wild,
Brought forth in joy, mild Pollux void of blame,
And steed-subduing Castor, heirs of fame.
These are the Powers who earth-born mortals save
And ships, whose flight is swift along the wave.
When wintry tempests o'er the savage sea
Are raging, and the sailors tremblingly
Call on the Twins of Jove with prayer and vow,
Gathered in fear upon the lofty prow,
And sacrifice with snow-white lambs, the wind
And the huge billow bursting close behind,
Even then beneath the weltering waters bear
The staggering ship—they suddenly appear,
On yellow wings rushing athwart the sky,
And lull the blasts in mute tranquility,

And strew the waves on the white ocean's bed,
Fair omen of the voyage; from toil and dread,
The sailors rest, rejoicing in the sight,
And plough the quiet sea in safe delight.

HYMN TO THE MOON

Daughters of Jove, whose voice is melody,
Muses, who know and rule all minstrelsy!
Sing the wide-wingèd Moon. Around the earth,
From her immortal head in Heaven shot forth,
Far light is scattered—boundless glory springs,
Where'er she spreads her many-beaming wings
The lampless air glows round her golden crown.
But when the Moon divine from Heaven is gone
Under the sea, her beams within abide,
Till, bathing her bright limbs in Ocean's tide,
Clothing her form in garments glittering far,
And having yoked to her immortal car
The beam-invested steeds, whose necks on high
Curve back, she drives to a remoter sky
A western Crescent, borne impetuously.
Then is made full the circle of her light,
And as she grows, her beams more bright and bright,
Are poured from Heaven, where she is hovering then,
A wonder and a sign to mortal men.
The Son of Saturn with this glorious Power
Mingled in love and sleep—to whom she bore,
Pandeia, a bright maid of beauty rare
Among the Gods, whose lives eternal are.
Hail Queen, great Moon, white-armed Divinity,
Fair-haired and favourable, thus with thee,
My song beginning, by its music sweet
Shall make immortal many a glorious feat
Of demigods, with lovely lips, so well
Which minstrels, servants of the muses, tell.

HYMN TO THE SUN

Offspring of Jove, Calliope, once more
To the bright Sun, thy hymn of music pour;
Whom to the child of star-clad Heaven and Earth
Euryphaessa, large-eyed nymph, brought forth;
Euryphaessa, the famed sister fair,
Of great Hyperion, who to him did bear
A race of loveliest children; the young Morn,
Whose arms are like twin roses newly born,
The fair-haired Moon, and the immortal Sun,
Who, borne by heavenly steeds his race doth run
Unconquerably, illuming the abodes
Of mortal men and the eternal gods.
Fiercely look forth his awe-inspiring eyes,
Beneath his golden helmet, whence arise
And are shot forth afar, clear beams of light;
His countenance with radiant glory bright,
Beneath his graceful locks far shines around,
And the light vest with which his limbs are bound
Of woof ethereal, delicately twined
Glows in the stream of the uplifting wind.
His rapid steeds soon bear him to the west;
Where their steep flight his hands divine arrest,
And the fleet car with yoke of gold, which he
Sends from bright heaven beneath the shadowy sea.

HYMN TO THE EARTH: MOTHER OF ALL

O Universal mother, who dost keep
From everlasting thy foundations deep,
Eldest of things, Great Earth, I sing of thee;
All shapes that have their dwelling in the sea,
All things that fly, or on the ground divine
Live, move, and there are nourished—these are thine;
These from thy wealth thou dost sustain; from thee
Fair babes are born, and fruits on every tree
Hang ripe and large, revered Divinity!
The life of mortal men beneath thy sway
Is held; thy power both gives and takes away!

Happy are they whom thy mild favours nourish,
All things unstinted round them grow and flourish.
For them, endures the life-sustaining field
Its load of harvest, and their cattle yield
Large increase, and their house with wealth is filled.
Such honoured dwell in cities fair and free,
The homes of lovely women, prosperously;
Their sons exult in youth's new budding gladness,
And their fresh daughters free from care or sadness,
With bloom-inwoven dance and happy song,
On the soft flowers the meadow-grass among,
Leap round them sporting—such delights by thee
Are given, rich Power, revered Divinity.
Mother of gods, thou wife of starry Heaven,
Farewell! be thou propitious, and be given
A happy life for this brief melody,
Nor thou nor other songs shall unremembered be.

HYMN TO MINERVA

I SING the glorious Power with azure eyes,
Athenian Pallas! tameless, chaste, and wise,
Tritogenia, town-preserving maid,
Revered and mighty; from his awful head
Whom Jove brought forth, in warlike armour drest,
Golden, all radiant! wonder strange possessed
The everlasting Gods that shape to see,
Shaking a javelin keen, impetuously
Rush from the crest of Ægis-bearing Jove;
Fearfully Heaven was shaken, and did move
Beneath the might of the Cerulean-eyed;
Earth dreadfully resounded, far and wide,
And lifted from its depths, the sea swelled high
In purple billows, the tide suddenly
Stood still, and great Hyperion's son long time
Checked his swift steeds, till where she stood sublime,
Pallas from her immortal shoulders threw
The arms divine; wise Jove rejoiced to view.
Child of the Ægis-bearer, hail to thee,
Nor thine nor others' praise shall unremembered be.

HYMN TO VENUS

[Vv. 1-55, with some omissions]

Muse, sing the deeds of golden Aphrodite,
Who wakens with her smile the lulled delight
Of sweet desire, taming the eternal kings
Of Heaven, and men, and all the living things
That fleet along the air, or whom the sea,
Or earth with her maternal ministry
Nourish innumerable, thy delight
All seek, O crownèd Aphrodite.
Three spirits canst thou not deceive or quell,
Minerva, child of Jove, who loves too well
Fierce war and mingling combat, and the fame
Of glorious deeds, to heed thy gentle flame.
Diana golden-shafted queen,
Is tamed not by thy smiles; the shadows green
Of the wild woods, the bow, the . .
And piercing cries amid the swift pursuit
Of beasts among waste mountains, such delight
Is hers, and men who know and do the right.
No, Saturn's first-born daughter, Vesta chaste,
Whom Neptune and Apollo wooed the last,
Such was the will of ægis-bearing Jove,
But sternly she refused the ills of Love,
And by her mighty father's head she swore
An oath not unperformed, that evermore
A virgin she would live 'mid deities
Divine: her father, for such gentle ties
Renounced, gave glorious gifts, thus in his hall
She sits and feeds luxuriously. O'er all
In every fane, her honours first arise
From men—the eldest of Divinities.
These spirits she persuades not, nor deceives,
But none beside escape, so well she weaves
Her unseen toils; nor mortal men, nor gods
Who live secure in their unseen abodes.

She won the soul of him whose fierce delight
Is thunder—first in glory and in might.
And, as she willed, his mighty mind deceiving,
With mortal limbs his deathless limbs inweaving,
Concealed him from his spouse and sister fair,
Whom to wise Saturn ancient Rhea bare
. . . . . but in return,
In Venus Jove did soft desire awaken,
That by her own enchantments overtaken,
She might, no more from human union free,
Burn for a nursling of mortality.
For once, amid the assembled Deities,
The laughter-loving Venus from her eyes
Shot forth the light of a soft starlight smile,
And boasting said, that she, secure the while,
Could bring at will to the assembled gods
The mortal tenants of earth's dark abodes,
And mortal offspring from a deathless stem
She could produce in scorn and spite of them.
Therefore he poured desire into her breast
Of young Anchises,
Feeding his herds among the mossy fountains
Of the wide Ida's many-folded mountains,
Whom Venus saw, and loved, and the love clung
Like wasting fire her senses wild among.

THE

LIFE OF HOMER

ATTRIBUTED TO

HERODOTUS OF HALICARNASSUS[1]

TRANSLATED BY

KENNETH R. H. MACKENZIE

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[1] Incorporating Jests and Epigrams ascribed to Homer. (See foregoing article on the Epic Poets after Homer.)

LIFE OF HOMER

Herodotus of Halicarnassus, in the pursuit of truth, writes this history of the birth and life of Homer.

When, many years ago, the city of Cumæ in Æolia was built, there flocked to it many persons of the various nations of Greece, and, among them, were some from Magnesia [the present Mansa]. One of these was Menapolus, the son of Ithagenes, the son of Crito. This man, far from possessing riches, had scarcely the means of subsistence. When settled in Cumæ, he married the daughter of Omyretis. By this marriage, he had one child, a girl, whom he called Critheïs. The husband and wife both died, leaving this child very young. The father, before his death, appointed Cleanax of Argos, one of his most intimate friends, her guardian.

In the course of time, by a secret intrigue, Critheïs found herself with child. This was for some time concealed; but Cleanax, having discovered it, was much afflicted by the occurrence, and privately reproached her with her fault, laying before her the dishonour she had brought upon herself. To repair the evil as much as possible, was now the subject of his thoughts. The inhabitants of Cumæ were at this time building a town in the basin of the Hermæan Gulf [the present gulf of Smyrna]. Theseus [founder of the town] wishing to render the name of his wife immortal, called it Smyrna [after her name]. He was a Thessalian, and of one of the most illustrious families in that country. His father was Eumelus, son of Admetus, from whom he inherited a considerable property. Cleanax conducted Critheïs secretly to that town, and committed her to the charge of Ismenias of Bœotia, a friend of his, on whom the lot had fallen to go to that colony.

Critheïs, being near her confinement, resorted to a festival held on the bank of the river Meles [now called Sarabat or Kedous], in company with other women; while there, the pains of childbirth came upon her, and she brought forth Homer, who, far from being blind, had excellent eyes. She named him Melesigenes, having been born by the river Meles. Critheïs remained some time with Ismenias, but afterwards left him, supporting herself and son by the work of her hands,[1] and upon the proceeds of the charity of her fellow-citizens, educating the boy as she could.

There lived at Smyrna, at this time, a man named Phemius, a teacher of literature and music;[2] who not being married, engaged Critheïs to manage his household, and spin the flax he received as the price of his scholastic labours. She acquitted herself of the task so satisfactorily, and conducted herself so modestly, that she won his esteem. He proposed to marry her, and, as an inducement to it, promised to adopt her son, intimating that the boy, carefully educated and instructed, would become a clever man; for he perceived in him a thoughtful and studious disposition. Critheïs, moved by these solicitations, consented to become his wife.

Care and an excellent education seconding the happy talents with which nature had endowed him, Melesigenes soon surpassed his schoolfellows in every attainment, and when older, he became as wise as his instructor. Phemius[3] died, leaving him heir to his property; his mother did not long survive her husband. Melesigenes, now his own master, taught in the school of Phemius, where every one applauded him. He excited the admiration, not only of the inhabitants of Smyrna, but also of the numerous strangers who resorted to that port on account of the trade carried on there, particularly in the exportation of corn, much of which came from the environs of the town. These, when their business was finished, frequented his school in great numbers.

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[1] It is supposed by Eustathius that Homer commemorated the honest endeavours of his mother to support herself and son, in the following lines: "As a just and industrious woman, holds the scale, and weighs the wool by which she lives; she is attentive to equalize the balances, so that she may afford her children a poor subsistence, the price of fatiguing labour." Iliad xii, 433—435.

[2] Music was the general term under which the ancients comprehended the knowledge of philosophy, logic, literature, harmonics, and in fact all that concerns mental culture. Gymnastics was its parallel, as the art of beautifying and strengthening the body.

[3] Homer, in gratitude to his preceptor, has celebrated his praise in the Odyssey, i, xvii, and xxii.

Among these strangers, was one whose name was Mentes. He had come from the island of Leucadia[1] to buy corn; the vessel in which he had arrived was his own; he also was a lettered man, and well educated for those times. This man persuaded Melesigenes to close his school, and accompany him on his travels. He promised to defray all the expenses, and give him a certain stipend, telling him that, while he was young, it was imperative on him to see with his own eyes the countries and cities of which he might thereafter have occasion to speak. These reasonings prevailed, I think, the more easily, as he had some idea, at that time, of devoting himself to the study of poetry, which would be facilitated by travel, as his innate prejudices would thereby be stifled. He quitted his school, and embarking with Mentes, examined all the curiosities of the countries which they visited, and informed himself of every thing by interrogating every one he met. We may also suppose, that he recorded in writing all the information he thought worthy of preservation.

After having traveled in Tyrrhenia and Iberia, they arrived at the island of Ithaca. Melesigenes, who had already suffered pains in his eyes, now became much worse. Mentes, obliged to go to Leucadia, his native country, on business, left him at Ithaca in the care of a particular friend of his, called Mentor, the son of Alcimus. He promised Melesigenes to return to him, that they might continue their voyages. Mentor's assistance was given to Melesigenes most zealously. He was rich, and was reputed a just and hospitable man. It was here, and during this period, that Melesigenes acquired a knowledge of all the legends respecting Odysseus. The inhabitants of Ithaca assert "that Melesigenes became blind in their island." I myself incline to the opinion, that he was cured of his disease, or that it was alleviated, and that afterwards, when at Colophon, he permanently lost his sight. And so think the Colophonians.

Mentes, having sailed from Leucadia, arrived at Ithaca.

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[1] Now called *Santa Maura,* one of the Ionian Isles, on the coast of Epirus.

Finding Melesigenes cured, he took him on board, and proceeded from place to place with him, coming at length to Colophon. It was there that Melesigenes was again attacked by the disease, which, raging more malevolently, left him totally blind. This misfortune determined him to depart from Colophon, and to return to Smyrna, where he studied the art of poetry and harmonics with much attention.

After some time, the bad state of his affairs induced him to go to Cumæ. Setting out, he travelled over the Hermæan plain, and arrived at Neon-teichos, a colony of Cumæ. It is related, that being at that city near an armourer's workshop, he recited these, his first verses:

"O ye, citizens of the amiable daughter of Cumæ, who cover the feet of Mount Sædena with your habitations, whose summit is shaded by refreshing woods, and whence flow the waters of divine Hermus, create of Zeus, respect the misfortunes of a stranger, who possesses no refuge for shelter."

For the river Hermus flows near Neon-teichos, and Mount Sædena overlooks both. The name of the armourer was Tychius. These verses gave him such pleasure that he invited Melesigenes to his house. Full of commiseration for a blind man reduced to beggary, he promised to share all that he had with him. Melesigenes having entered, seated himself, and in the presence of several of the citizens, manifested his capabilities, by singing the exploits of Amphiaraüs against Thebes, and the Hymns to the gods. Each gave his opinion, and Melesigenes having drawn a just conclusion from their criticisms, his hearers were struck with admiration.

Whilst at Neon-teichos, his poems furnished him with the means of subsistence. The place he customarily occupied during the recitation of his verses is still shown. It is held in great estimation even now, and is shaded by a poplar which was planted about the time of his arrival.

But at length, compelled by necessity, and finding scarcely sufficient to keep him alive, he determined to proceed to Cumæ, to see if he could meet with better fortune there. When ready to depart, he recited these verses:

"May my limbs support me to that honourable town, whose inhabitants possess no less prudence than sagacity."

Having departed for Cumæ, he went by way of Larissa, considering that road the most convenient. It was there, as the Cumæans say, that he composed the epitaph of Gordius, king of Phrygia, at the request of the father and mother of the wife of that prince. It is engraven on the pillar of the monument of Gordius, where it may yet be seen.

"I am a maiden sculptured in bronze. Placed on the monument of Midas, as long as water may be seen to flow in the plains, and the trees to flower in spring; as long as the rising sun makes men to rejoice, and the moon, by the brilliancy of her light, dissipates the darkness of the night; as long as the rivers flow rapidly along between their banks, and the ocean covers the shore with its waves, I shall be continually seen reposing on this sad tomb, announcing to the passengers that Midas lies here interred."

When Melesigenes arrived at Cumæ, he frequented the assemblies of the elders, and there recited his verses. Admiring their beautiful structure, they fell into an ecstasy of delight. Joyful at the reception his poems had prepared for him among the Cumæans, and at the pleasure with which they had heard him, he one day proposed to them, that if the state would maintain him, he would make the city of Cumæ very celebrated. His hearers approved of the proposition, and engaged him to present himself before the council, where they would support him with all their interest. Melesigenes, encouraged by their approbation, presented himself at the House of Assembly on an audience day, and addressing the person who had the office of presenting those who had any request to prefer, he begged to be allowed to enter. This officer did not neglect to present him the first opportunity that offered. Melesigenes, as soon as that ceremony was over, addressed the assembly regarding the proposition he had formerly made. His speech ended, he retired, in order that the representatives might deliberate on the answer necessary to give him.

He that presented him, and all those representatives belonging to the Elders' Assembly, where he had recited, voted for him. It is said that one only opposed the measure, giving for his reasons, "that if they thought to feed *homers,* they would find themselves encumbered with useless folks." From this time the name of Homer, bestowed thus opprobriously on Melesigenes in consequence of his misfortune, was most generally used in speaking of him; for the Cumæans, in their dialect, called blind persons *homers*. Strangers always used this name in discoursing of the poet.

The Archon concluded with saying, "that it was impolitic to maintain the blind man." This caused the majority of the representatives to vote against the measure, the second time, and thus the Archon obtained more votes than opposers. The presenting officer communicated with Melesigenes on the subject, informing him of the progress of the debate, and of the decree. Deploring his ill fortune, he recited these verses:

"To what sad fate has father Zeus destined me? I, who have been carefully educated at the feet of a beloved mother during the time that the people of Phriconis,[1] skilful in taming horses, and breathing only war, raised the Æolian city, honourable Smyrna, on the borders of the ocean, by the behest of Zeus, that city traversed by the sacred waters of Meles. The illustrious daughters of Zeus, on their departure from these places, wished to immortalize this sacred town [Cumæ] by my verses; but, deaf to my voice, the brutish herd disdained my harmonious lays. No, it shall not continue so! whoever in blind folly heaped insults on my head, shall not escape unscathed. I will courageously endure the ills dealt out to me by the Deity. 'Tis over, I will no longer rest in Cumæ. My feet burn to depart hence, and my panting heart urges me to seek a foreign clime, and there to dwell, however insignificant the place may be."

On leaving Cumæ for Phocæa he pronounced a malediction against the Cumæans, to the following effect: "that there never might be born in Cumæ a poet, who could render it celebrated, and give it glory." Arrived at Phocæa, he supported himself as he had done at Cumæ and elsewhere, assiduously frequenting the places of assembly, at which he recited his verses. There was, at that time, an unprincipled man named Thestorides at Phocæa, a teacher of the rudiments of literature. Having observed the talents of Homer, he offered to shelter and take care of him, if, as a recompense, Homer would permit him to take down his verses in writing, and if he would do the same with those he might hereafter compose. Homer, being poor and destitute, accepted his offer.

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[1] Phricium was a town and mountain near Thermopylæ. A colony from thence built Cumæ. Hence Cumæ is occasionally called Phriconis.

During his residence in Phocæa, at the house of Thestorides, he composed the Little Iliad,[1] of which the two first verses are as follows:

"I sing of Ilium and Dardania, abounding in excellent horses, and the ills the Greeks, servants of Mars, endured in their plains."

He next composed the Phocæid,[2] as the Phocæans say. When Thestorides had written down that poem, and the rest he had received from Homer, he neglected him, and determining to appropriate them to himself, left Phocæa, Homer thus addressed him:

"Thestorides, of the many things hidden from man, the most obscure is the human heart." Thestorides, having sailed from Phocæa, retired to Chios, where he established a school of literature, and by his having recited Homer's verses, which he did, attributing them to himself, he obtained great praise and much money. As to Homer, he continued in the same way of life as heretofore, being supported by his verses.

Shortly afterwards some merchants of Chios, having come to Phocæa, went to the assemblies where Homer recited. Surprised to hear those verses recited that they had so often applauded when spoken by Thestorides, they informed Homer that there was at Chios a teacher of literature, who was much esteemed for the recitation of the same poems. Homer, perceiving who it was, prepared for a journey to Chios. Having gone down to the port, he found no ship that was going to that island, but met with one about to sail for Erythræ,[3] to fetch timber. As that town seemed to be convenient for passing over into Chios, he accosted the seamen courteously, entreating them to allow him to accompany them, and, as an inducement, promised to recite some of his verses to them. They agreed to this, and on his having entered the vessel, and seated himself, after extolling their hospitality, he addressed these verses to them:

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[1] See article on the Epic Poets after Homer, page 341.

[2] Of this poem nothing is known. It was probably a history of the founding and progress of the town of Phocæa, now called Phokia.

[3] A town of Ionia, opposite Chios, now called Ritre. It was built by Neleus, son of Codrus.

"Give ear to my prayer, powerful Poseidon, who reigneth over the vast plains of Helicon; send us a favourable breeze, and allow a joyful return to these mariners, fellows in the voyage, and to the master of the vessel. May I arrive safely at the foot of frowning Mimas, and meet with just and worthy men! May I also avenge myself on the man, who, by deceit, has irritated Zeus, the hospitable god, against him; who, admitting me to his table, afterwards violated the sacred duties of the host in my person."

Arrived at Erythræ, with favourable winds, Homer remained for the rest of the day on board the vessel, but, next morning, begged the sailors to allow some one of them to conduct him to the town. They granted his request. He departed, and having come to Erythræ, which is situated in a naked and rocky country, recited the following verses:

"Holy Mother Gaia, who dispensest thy riches to mankind, prodigal in goodness to those whom thou favourest; to those who offend thee thou apportionest only a rocky and sterile soil."

On his arrival he made inquiries concerning the navigation to Chios. A person who had known Homer in Phocæa, remembering him with regard, approached and embraced him. Homer begged his aid, which he readily gave.

Not finding any ship in the harbour, they went to that part of the strand whence the fishermen usually put off, where they found one about to sail for Chios. The conductor of Homer entreated them to take him across with them; but, deaf to his prayers, they continued their preparations for departure. Homer, on this occurrence, made the following verses:

"Mariners, who traverse the seas, continually exposed to the hard vicissitudes of fortune, and who, to regale the more luxurious, seek a hardly-earned subsistence on the waves, honour Zeus, the god of hospitality, who reigns over us. His wrath is dreadful; beware lest it burst on your heads, should you offend him."

The fishermen, all being ready, at length departed, but being driven about by adverse winds, were forced to return. They found Homer still seated on the strand. Hearing the noise of their return, he addressed them thus: "The winds are contrary; receive me on board, and they will change." The fishermen, regretting their inhospitality, promised not to desert him, if he would come on board.

He enters the vessel, they leave the shore, and now they approach the opposite coast. They begin to fish. Homer passed the night on the sea-shore, but, at the dawn of day, he departed. Wandering about, he came to a hamlet called Pithys [Pine-cone], where he lay down to rest. During his sleep, the fruit of a pine-tree fell on him. Some call this fruit by the name of *strobilus,* others call them pine-cones. The following verses were made by Homer on this occasion:

"On the summit of Mount Ida there are pine-trees continually agitated by the winds, whose fruit is more agreeable than that of these.[1] From the bosom of that mountain, iron shall come, sacred to the god of battles, when it shall be occupied by the Cebrenians."

For about this time the Cumæans were building Cebrene, on the heights of Mount Ida, near the place where the iron-mines are.

Homer, having set out from Pithys, went toward a troop of goats, being attracted by their cries. The dogs, seeing him approach, began to bark at and annoy him. Glaucus, for that was the name of the shepherd, hearing his cries, ran hastily, calling his dogs back, and menacing them.[2] This man, surprised to see a blind person alone, and not knowing how he came there, was rendered speechless from astonishment. Having accosted him, he asked him how he came to an uninhabited place, where there were no paths, or who had guided him thither. Homer related his misfortunes to him. Glaucus had a tender heart, and was touched by the narration. He guided Homer to his own house, lighted a fire, prepared a repast, and setting it before him, pressed him to eat.

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[1] Galen in his De Alimentorum Facultate says, "The cone, or fruit of the pine, gives a juice of good quality, thick, and nourishing, but not easy of digestion. The Greeks of the present time do not call them *cones,* but *strobili.*"

[2] Conf. passages in Odyss. xiv. These seem plainly to refer to circumstances mentioned in the text, i.e. the punishment of the dogs by Glaucus, and the flight of Thestorides.

The dogs, instead of eating, continued to bark at Homer, as dogs usually do at strangers. Homer, observing it, recited these verses:

"Glaucus, keeper of these flocks, understand thoroughly what I shall say. Give your dogs their food in the porch. This advice is good. They will then hear the steps of men or beasts going towards your enclosures more easily."

Glaucus, finding the advice good on trial, praised the giver of it more than ever. When they had eaten, animated conversation followed. Homer narrated his adventures in the various countries and cities he had seen. Glaucus was delighted, but as it was time to sleep, they went to rest.

The following morning, Glaucus thought it necessary to inform his master of the agreeable acquaintance he had made. Confiding the flocks to the care of his fellow slave, and leaving Homer in the house, assuring him that he would not fail to return quickly, he departed. Arrived at Bolissus,[1] a small town, at a little distance from the farm, he related to his master all that he knew of Homer, speaking of his arrival as an astonishing thing, and demanding to know his wishes on the subject. His master did not like the occurrence, and blamed Glaucus for his foolishness, in admitting a blind man to his table. Nevertheless, he ordered Homer to be brought to him.

Glaucus, on his return, related to Homer all the particulars of his visit, and begged him to follow him thither, telling him that all his future happiness and good fortune depended on his going to Bolissus. Homer acquiesced in what he said. Glaucus presented him to his master, who found him to be a man of information and talent, and offered to retain him in his house if he would instruct his children, who were yet very young. Homer accepted these proposals. It was at Bolissus, in the house of this Chian citizen, that he composed the Cercopia,[1] the Batrachomyomachia,[2] the Epicichlidia,[3] and all those other amusing books and poems that have gained him such celebrity. When Thestorides heard that Homer was in Chios, he left the island.

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[1] Bolissus, now called Voliso, is a small town on the north-eastern coast of Chios, and near Cardamyle.

Some time after, Homer begged the Chian citizen to take him to the town of Chios: he there established a school,[4] in which he taught the maxims of poetry to young people. He acquitted himself of this task so efficiently, in the opinion of the Chians, that the greater part held him in high estimation. He thus acquired a considerable fortune, married,[5] and had two daughters, one of whom died single, the other married a Chian.[1]

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[1] Included by Suidas and Proclus among his works. The word signifies "deceivers."

[2] See foregoing article on the Epic Poets after Homer, and the translation of the poem which follows it.

[3] So called because when he sang to the boys they rewarded him with fieldfares [*kichlai*].

[4] Speaking of the antiquities of the island of Chios, Chandler says (Travels, vol. i. p. 61): "The most curious remain which has been named, without reason, The School of Homer. It is on the coast, at some distance from the city northward, and appears to have been an open temple of Cybele, formed on the top of a rock. The shape is oval, and in the centre is the image of the goddess, the head and an arm wanting. She is represented, as usual, sitting. The chair has a lion carved on each side, and on the back. The area is bounded by a low rim or seat, and about five yards over. The whole is hewn out of the mountain, is rude, indistinct, and probably of the most remote antiquity." Pope also, in his Introductory Essay, mentions a ruinous building in the neighbourhood of Bolissus, as being traditionally named the house of Homer.

[5] His wife's father seems to have been Creophilus, (according to other accounts he was Homer's son-in-law, and received the Œchalia, an epic ascribed to Homer, as a dowry,) an epic poet of Chios, Samos, or Ios. Plutarch reports that it was in the possession of his family that the Iliad and the Odyssey were discovered.

He shows great gratitude to his benefactors in his poems, particularly to Mentor of Ithaca, in the Odyssey, on account of his having taken care of him during his blindness, while in that island. He mentions his name in that poem, placing him amongst the companions of Odysseus, and relates that that prince, on his departure for Troy, appointed him steward of his house and lands, knowing him to be the most just and worthy man in Ithaca. Homer often mentions him in other parts of his poem, and when Athenê is represented speaking to some one, it is under the form of Mentor.[2] He also testifies his gratitude to Phemius, who, not content with instructing him in literature, had also maintained him at his own expense. It may be observed in these verses particularly:

"A herald placed a magnificent lyre in the hands of Phemius, the worthiest pupil of Apollo; unwillingly he takes it, constrained to sing among those lovers. Traversing the lyre with light and active fingers, he produces melodious sounds."

He also celebrates the sea-captain with whom he had traveled through so many lands. His name was Mentes, and these are the verses [Odyss. i.]:

"My name is Mentes; born of Anchialus, illustrious by his valour, I reign over the expert-rowing Taphians."

He also speaks of the armourer, Tychius, who had hospitably entertained him at Neonteichos. The verses in his praise occur in the Iliad [Book vii.], thus:

"Already the son of Telamon waits on him near, carrying a tower-like shield. Tychius, at Hylæ resident, unequalled in industry by any of his fellows, made him this buckler, a master-piece of his art, formed of the spoil of seven mighty oxen, bound by a strong covering of brass."

These poems rendered Homer celebrated in Ionia, and his reputation began to spread itself in the continent of Greece. On this account, many persons visited him during his residence in Chios, and some advised him to go to Greece. He had always desired to do so, and thus the counsel pleased him.

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[1] For Chian read Cyprian, as Stasinus, the son-in-law, was a poet of Cyprus. He contests the honour of the authorship of the Cypria, with Homer and Hegesias, or Hegesinus, a Salaminian.

[2] Odyssey, ii.

He had praised the town of Argos very frequently, but remembering that he had no where mentioned Athens, he introduced some verses into the larger Iliad in its praise, where he speaks of that city in the most flattering manner. It occurs in the Catalogue of the Ships [Book ii.]:

"The city of generous Erechtheus, which the fruitful Earth produced, and Athenê, daughter of Zeus, fostered."

He then highly extols Menestheus. He excels, says he, in arranging the chariots and infantry in order of battle. Here are the lines:

"The son of Peteus, Menestheus, led these troops. Of all the mortals fed by Earth, none equalled this chief in the art of ordering the chariots and forces for battle."

He placed Aias, son of Telamon, near the Athenians; he commanded the Salaminians. That is in the following verses:

"Aias, son of Telamon, conducted twelve long ships[1] from Salamis, and placed them beside the Athenian squadron."

Lastly, in the Odyssey, he feigns that Athenê, after an interview with Odysseus, goes to Athens, the town she honoured above all others:

"Taking flight towards the Marathonian plains, she proceeded to the magnificent town of Athens, the famous dwelling-place of long-departed Erechtheus." [Book vii.]

After inserting these lines in his poems, Homer prepared to set out for Greece, and passed over to Samos on his way thither. The Samians were employed on his arrival in celebrating the Apaturian games. An inhabitant of Samos, who had seen him in Chios, observing him descending from the vessel, ran to inform his countrymen of the arrival of the poet, whom he praised most enthusiastically. The Samians deputed him to fetch Homer. He immediately retraced his steps, and meeting Homer, thus addressed him: "Chian host, the Samians celebrate the Apaturian festival: the citizens bid you to the feast." Homer consented, and accompanied the messenger.

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[1] The *long* ships were vessels of war; the *round* ships, merchantmen and transports.

During their walk, they encountered some women offering a sacrifice to Kourotrophos.[1] The priestess observing him, said angrily to him, "Man, get thee from our sacrifices." Homer reflected awhile on these words, having asked of his conductor who had addressed them to him, and to what deity they sacrificed. The Samian replied, "that it was a woman sacrificing to Kourotrophos." On this, Homer composed and repeated the following lines:

"Hear my prayer, O Kourotrophos! May that woman abhor the caresses of amiable youth! May she be only pleased by those of men whose hair is white with age, whose heart is burning, and whose senses are blunted."

When arrived at the place where the Phratrium feasted, Homer paused on the threshold, and recited these verses to his conductor, while a fire was kindling in the hall: though some contend that the fire was not lighted until afterwards:

"A man is proud of his children; a town of its battlements; a plain of its horses; the ocean of its navies; riches ornament the house; just judges seated in the hall of justice, are a noble spectacle; but the most pleasant sight, in my opinion, is that of a burning fire, on a day when the son of Saturn decks the ground with snow and frost."

He entered, and seating himself with the Phratrium, received much attention and respect from its members. Here he passed the night.

The next day he went out. Some potters having observed him while they were mending their fire, invited him to enter, and not the less readily from having a knowledge of his talents. They entreated him to sing some of his verses, promising to recompense him for his kindness by presenting him with some of their vases, or in any other way they could. Homer sung them those verses which are called "The Poem of the Furnace.[2]"

"Potters, if ye bestow on me the stipulated reward, I will sing these favourable verses to you. Hear my prayer, Athene,[1] protect the furnace. Grant that the cotylii and the baskets[2] be covered with a shining black; may they also bake quickly. May they sell for much in the Agora, for much in the street. Grant, O goddess, that I may increase in wisdom. But if you shamelessly endeavour to deceive me, I invoke all the pests of your trade, the Syntripi, Asbeti, Abacti, and Omodami,[3] on your furnace. May the hearth and the home become the prey of the flame, and, during the confusion caused by the fire, may nothing be heard save the lamentations of the potters. As the trembling of the terrified horse, so may be that of the furnace at the bursting of the vases. Circe, dread daughter of the Sun, celebrated for thy many enchantments, poison the potters, and destroy their work. And thou, Chiron, bring thy dire hosts of Centaurs and their victims to aid in the destruction of these places. May the furnace fall under the stroke of the destroyers! may the potters, to enhance their grief, be the miserable spectators of the frightful scene! I shall rejoice at your misfortunes! May those who approach to extinguish the flames, be consumed by the fire, that all the world may learn not to commit injustice."

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[1] "Nursing mother," supposed to be identical with the Roman Lucina.
[2] Also attributed to Hesiod.

He passed the winter at Samos. At the Neomenia, or New Moons, he frequented the houses of the rich, where he sang the Eirisionic hymn,[4] thus earning his subsistence during his visits, he was usually surrounded by the children of the most noble men of the island.

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[1] Athene was one of the tutelary deities of the potters, as a patroness of the arts.

[2] The potters made vases like baskets; hence their name.

[3] *Syntrips* signifies the bruising sustained by the vases in rubbing against each other; *smaragos,* the noise they make in breaking; *asbetos,* is an inextinguishable fire in the workshop; *abaktos,* the consequent astonishment of the potters; and *omodamos,* the annihilation of every thing.

[4] The Eirision was a branch of olive, and sometimes of laurel, rolled in bandages of linen entwined. To the pendent ends, figs, bread, honey, oil, and wine, were fastened. St. Clement says, "The Eirision carries figs, bread, and honey, in a cotylus, anointing oil, and wine, the enervating vapour of which inspires gentle slumber."

"We directed our steps towards the mansion of a wealthy man, full of precious things. Gates fly open! Plutos presents himself, accompanied by joyous Mirth and gentle Peace. May the goblets overflow, may the flame ascend from the hearth, may the table groan under its plenteous burden! May the wife of the son of the house come to you drawn by mules, and in a chariot! may she, seated in an amber chair, joyfully spin her wool! I shall return, yea, I shall return, like unto the swallow every year! I am at your gate! Whether you present me with any thing or no, I remain not; I purpose not to live with you!"

These verses are sung every time tribute is levied in the honour of Apollo Pythos.

The spring having arrived, Homer desired to leave Samos for Athens. He sailed for that place, in company with some Samians, and arrived at the island of Ios [the present Nio]. They did not stop at the town, but at some distance off, on the seashore. Homer, feeling himself very ill, was carried on shore. Contrary winds retarding the departure of the vessel, the travellers remained several days at anchor. Some of the inhabitants visited Homer, and they no sooner heard him speak than they felt a great degree of veneration for him.

While the sailors and the townspeople were speaking with Homer, some fishermen's children ran their vessel on shore, and descending to the sands, addressed these words to the assembled persons: "Hear us, strangers, explain our riddle if ye can." Then some of those that were present ordered them to speak. "We leave," say they, "what we take, and we carry with us that which we cannot take." No one being able to solve the enigma, they thus expounded it. "Having had an unproductive fishery," say they in explanation, "we sat down on the sand, and being annoyed by the vermin, left the fish we had taken on the shore, taking with us the vermin we could not catch." Homer, on hearing this, made these verses: "Come, your fathers possess neither ample heritages, nor numerous flocks."

Homer died in Ios of the disease he had contracted on his arrival, and not, as some authors have related, caring more for interest than truth, of grief at not understanding the enigma of the fisher-boys.[1] He was buried near the shore of the island of Ios, by his companions, and those citizens who had visited him during his illness. Many years after, when his poems, become public, were admired by all, the inhabitants of Ios inscribed these elegiacs on his tomb; they are certainly not composed by himself.

"THE EARTH HERE COVERS THE HEAD OF DIVINE HOMER, WHOSE POETRY HAS IMMORTALIZED HEROES."

It may be seen from what I have said, that Homer was neither a Dorian, nor of the island of Ios, but an Æolian. This may also be conjectured from the great poet only speaking of what he thinks the most admirable customs, and he would naturally suppose those of his own country to be the best. It may be judged from these verses [Iliad i. 459, and ii. 422]:

"They raise the heads of the oxen toward heaven, cut their throats, and sever them in pieces; they separate the thighs, and place over them a double layer of fat, and bleeding morsels from every part of the victim." The kidneys are not mentioned here, the Æolians being the only people of Greece who do not burn them. Homer also shows his Æolian descent in the following verses, there again describing the customs of that country:

"The elder burns the sacrifice on the wood of the altar, pouring over it libations of wine. The youths stand around holding five-barred gridirons." [Iliad i.]

The Æolians are the only people of Greece who roast the entrails on *five*-barred gridirons, those of the other Greeks having but *three.* The Æolians also say *pempe.* for *pente* [five].

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[1] The following passage occurs in Pseudo-Plutarch's Life of Homer: "He was warned by an oracle to beware of the *young men's riddle.* The meaning of this remained long unexplained to him, till he arrived at the island of Ios; there, as he sat conversing with the fishermen, some of them proposed a riddle in verse to him, and, not comprehending it, he died of grief." Pope, in his Introductory Essay, says, "The story refutes itself, by carrying superstition at one end, and folly at the other. It seems conceived with an air of derision, to lay a great man in the dust after a foolish manner." This completely sets the question of the authenticity of this Life at rest, since the writer plainly refers to this idle tale, recorded by an author of so much later date.

I have now concluded that which concerns the birth, life, and death of Homer. It remains for me to determine the time at which he lived. This is most easily done in the following manner. The island of Lesbos was not colonized[1] till the hundred and thirtieth year after the Trojan war, and eighteen years subsequently Smyrna was built by the Cumæans. At this time Homer was born. From the birth of the poet to the passage of Xerxes into Greece, six hundred and twenty-two years elapsed. The course of time may easily be calculated by a reference to the Archonships. It is thus proved that Homer was born one hundred and sixty-eight years after the taking of Troy.

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[1] The Æolians arrived B. C. 1140, and as the original inhabitants, the Pelasgi, lived in wandering tribes, these were soon reduced.

THE DRAGON'S TEETH

TRANSLATED FROM THE ARGONAUTICA

OF

APOLLONIUS OF RHODES[1]

BY

ARTHUR S. WAY

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[1] See article on the Epic Poets after Homer, page 341.

THE DRAGON'S TEETH

Aison, who reigned in Iolcus in Thessaly, was deprived of his kingdom by his half-brother Pelias, who attempted to take the life of Aison's infant son Jason. The babe was saved by friendly hands and given over to the care of the centaur Chiron. Becoming a man he demanded the kingdom of Pelias, which the usurper promised to render him on condition that he brought to Iolcus the golden fleece of the ram on which Phrixus, son of Athamas, had fled from his father and Ino, his stepmother, to Aietes, king of Aia in Kolchis, a mighty magician. Aietes hospitably received the runaway, giving him his daughter in marriage. In gratitude to the gods for his good fortune, Phrixus sacrificed the ram and hung up its fleece in the grove of Ares where it was guarded by a sleepless dragon.

The adventure appealed to Jason's bold spirit, and he undertook the enterprise. Gathering fifty men, the chief heroes of Greece, about him, he set out for Kolchis in the great fifty-oared Argo, a vessel built for the expedition by Argos under the direction of Athene, a patroness of Jason, who for his guidance inserted in the prow a piece of the speaking oak of Dodona.

After many adventures, the companions of the Argo, known as the Argonauts, arrive at Kolchis. Upon Jason's demand Aietes promises to give up the golden fleece, provided that Jason catch two brazen-hoofed, fire-breathing bulls, and, yoking them to a brazen plough, plough the field of Ares, and then sow the furrows with dragon's teeth, which would spring up into armed men whom he was required to overcome. The hero has given up all hope of success when Aphrodite, another divine patroness of Jason, kindles in the breast of the king's daughter Medea an irresistible love for the stranger. This princess, who, like her father, is a magician, gives Jason an ointment to protect him from the fiery breath of the bulls, as well as strength to harness them, and advises him to throw a stone among the warriors who will spring from the sown dragon's teeth, thereby causing them to turn their weapons upon each other.

The following selection from the Argonautica describes Jason's successful accomplishment of the task.

The epic goes on to relate the refusal of Aietes to fulfil his promise, Jason's taking the fleece by help of the wiles of Medea, who also causes the murder of her brother in behalf of the stranger, the resultant fight between the Greeks and the pursuing Kolchians, and the final safe return of the Argonauts to Greece with Medea and the golden fleece.

Now wended Aison's son aback to the place where stayed
His comrades, what time he had left them in faring to meet the maid.
Then, telling them all the story the while, with these did he hie
To the throng of the heroes; and now to the galley drew they anigh.
And they saw him, and lovingly greeted, and asked him of all that befell:
And he in the midst of them all did the maiden's counsels tell;
And he showed them the dread spell-drug. One only of all sat apart,
Idas, nursing his wrath: but the others with joyful heart
Turned them, when darkness fell, their hands from their labour to stay,
And in great peace laid them down to their rest: but with dawning day
To Aietes, to ask for the seed of the serpent, sent they away
Two men; and foremost Telamon Ares-beloved they sent,
And Aithalides, glorious scion of Hermes, beside him went.
So went they, and not for nought, for to these at their coming were given
Of Aietes the king the teeth for the grim strife hard to be striven,
The teeth of the dragon Aonian, that, seeking the wide world through
For Europa, Kadmus found in Ogygian Thebe, and slew,
The monster that lurked, a warder, beside the Aretian spring.
There also he dwelt, by the heifer led, which Apollo the king
By the word of prophecy gave for his guide, that he should not stray.
These teeth did Tritonis the Goddess tear from its jawbone away,
And the gift on Aietes and him that had slain the beast she bestowed.
On the plain Aonian Kadmus the teeth of the serpent sowed;

And an earth-born nation was founded there of Agenor's son,
The remnant left when the harvest of Ares' spear was done.
So the teeth to bear to the galley Aietes gave full fain,
For he weened that to win to the goal of his task he should strive in vain,
Yea, though to the yoking of those dread bulls he should haply attain.
 And the sun down under the dark earth far away in the west,
Beyond the uttermost hills of the Aethiops, sank to his rest;
And the Night was laying her yoke on the necks of her steeds. Then spread
On the shore by the hawsers of Argo the heroes each his bed.
But Jason, so soon as the flashing stars of the circling Bear
Had set, and under the firmament hushed was all the air,
Unto the wilderness even as a thief all stealthily hied
With whatso was needful; for all had he taken thought to provide
In the day: and fared with him Argus, and milk from the flock he bore,
And a ewe therewithal; for these had he ta'en from the galley's store.
But when he beheld the place, which was far aloof from the tread
Of men, where under the unscreened sky the clear meads spread,
There first of all in the flow of the sacred river he bathed
His limbs full reverently, and all his body he swathed
In a dark-hued cloak, which Hypsipyle, daughter of Lemnos' race,
Gave him aforetime, memorial of many a loving embrace.
Thereafter he digged him a pit in the plain of a cubit wide,
And the billets he heaped, and the lamb's throat cut by the dark pit's side.
And the carcase he stretched on the pile, and he thrust thereunder the fire
And kindled the brands, and mingled libations he poured on the pyre,
Calling on Hekate Brimo to draw for his helper nigh.

And when he had called on her, backward he fared, and she hearkened his cry.
Out of nethermost caverns of darkness the Awful Queen drew near
To the Aisonid's sacrifice, and about her did shapes of fear,
Even serpents, in horrible wreaths and knots, mid the oak-boughs hang:
And flashed a fitful splendour of torches unnumbered; and rang
Around her wild and high the baying of hounds of hell.
And all the meadow-land trembled under her tread; and the yell
Pealed of the marish-haunting Nymphs of the river, that dance
In the pastures wherethrough Amaryntian Phasis' ripples glance.
And terror gat hold upon Aison's son; but, for all his dread,
Yet he turned him not round as his feet thence bore him, until he had sped
Back to his friends: and by this over Caucasus' snow-flecked height,
As she rose, was the Dawn mist-cradled shooting her shafts of light.
And now did Aietes array in the corslet of stubborn mould
His breast, the corslet that Ares gave, in the day when rolled
Mimas of Phlegra beneath his hands in the dust of doom.
And he set on his head the golden helmet of fourfold plume
Flaming like to the world-encompassing sun's red gleam,
When first in the dawning he leapeth up from the Ocean-stream.
He uplifted his manifold-plated shield, and he grasped in his hand
His terrible spear and resistless: was none that before it might stand
Of the rest of the heroes, since Herakles now they had left afar:
He only against it had matched his might in the shock of war.
And his fair-fashioned chariot of fleet-footed steeds was stayed for the king
By Phaethon hard by; then to the chariot-floor did he spring;

And he drew through his fingers the reins, and forth of the city-gate
Drove he along the broad highway, by the lists of fate
To stand; and a countless multitude hastened forth at his side.
And as when to the Isthmian athlete-strife Poseidon doth ride
High-borne on his car, or Tainarus-wards, or to Lerna's mere,
Or Hyantian Onchestus, the temple-grove that the nations revere;
And as when to Kalaurea oft-times his chariot-wheels have rolled,
And Haimonia's rock, and Geraistus' town that the forests enfold,
Even so was Aietes, lord of the Kolchian folk, to behold.
But Jason the while, obeying the rede from Medea that came,
In water hath steeped that drug; and he sprinkled his shield with the same,
And his sturdy spear and his sword; and his comrades with might and main
Made proof of his harness, thronging around: yet essayed they in vain
To bend that spear, though it were but a little; but evermore
Unyielding and stark it abode in their strong hands, even as before.
But Idas, Aphareus' son—for with wrath was the heart of him black—
With his great sword hewed at the shaft by the butt; but the blade leapt back
As hammer from anvil, jarred by the shock; and a mighty shout
From the heroes rejoicing in hope of the trial's end rang out.
Thereafter his own limbs Jason sprinkled; and lo, he was filled
With terrible prowess, unspeakable, aweless; the hands of him thrilled
Tingling with strength, as waxed their sinews with gathering might.
And even as when a battle-steed afire for the fight
Leapeth and neigheth and paweth the ground, and glorying rears

His neck like a stormy-crested billow, and pricketh his ears,
Even so in the pride of his prowess triumphant was Aison's son,
And hither and thither on high he bounded now and anon,
In his hands uptossing his brazen shield and his spear's tough ash.
Thou hadst said that adown through the murky welkin the leaping flash
Of the tempest-levin was gleaming and flickering once and again
From the clouds that are bringing hard after their burden of blackest rain.
Nor long time now would they tarry from faring forth to essay
The emprise, but row after row upon Argo's thwarts sat they,
And onward exceeding swiftly to Ares' plain they sped.
Overagainst the city so far before them it spread
As the space from the start to the turning-post that the car must win
What time, when a king unto Hades hath passed, his princely kin
For hero and horse ordain the strife of the funeral game.
There found they Aietes, and other the tribes of the Kolchian name,
The folk on the cliffs Caucasian in lines far-stretching arrayed,
While the king by the winding brink of the river their coming stayed.
And Aison's son, when his comrades had made the hawsers fast,
Then with his spear and his shield to the mighty trial passed,
Bounding from Argo forth; and there was he bearing with him
His gleaming helm with the dragon's sharp teeth filled to the brim,
With his brand on his shoulders slung, bare-limbed, and in some wise seeming
As Ares, in some wise Apollo the lord of the sword gold-gleaming.

O'er the fallow he glanced, and the brazen yoke of the bulls he espied.
And the plough, hewn solid of massy adamant, therebeside.
So he strode thereunto, and beside it his strong spear planted upright
On the butt-spike thereof, and leaning against it the morion he pight.
Then tracing the countless tracks of the bulls right on did he fare
With nought but his shield: but suddenly forth from an unseen lair,
From a den in the bowels of the earth, wherein was their grimly stall,
Whereover the lurid-gleaming smoke ever hung as a pall,
Forth rushed they together as one, outbreathing the splendour of flame;
And the heroes quaked when they saw. But Jason, as onward they came,
Set wide his feet; and even as a rock in the sea doth abide
The charging surges whereon the scourging storm-blasts ride,
Before him he held to withstand them his shield; and the terrible twain
Their strong horns bellowing dashed against it with might and main:
Nevertheless by their onset they stirred him never a jot.
And even as when the armourers' bellows of stout hide wrought
In the piercèd melting-pot anon with murmur and sigh
Kindle the ravening flame, and anon doth the breath of them die;
And an awful roar goeth up therefrom as the flames leap higher
From beneath, even so these twain outbreathing the rushing fire
Roared from their mouths, and about him as lightning leapt and played
The devouring blaze: yet warded him ever the spells of the maid.

Then grasped he the tip of the horn of the right-hand monster, and so
Mightily haled with his uttermost strength, till he bowed it low
To the brazen yoke, and, striking its hoof of brass with his foot,
Suddenly cast it adown on its knees, and its fellow brute,
Even as it charged him, with one thrust down on its knees did he throw.
Then his broad shield cast he away on the ground, and, to and fro
To this side and that side striding, he kept them fall'n in their place
On their fore-knees, swiftly moving athwart the fervent blaze,
While marvelled the king at the hero's might. Then drew nigh two,
Even Tyndareus' sons—for that thus long since had he bidden them do;—
And they lifted and gave him the yoke on the necks of the bulls to be bound:
And deftly thereon did he bind it, and 'twixt them upraised from the ground
The brazen pole, and he made it fast by its pointed tip
Unto the yoke: and they twain back from the fire to the ship
Withdrew. Then he caught up again, and cast on his shoulders his shield
Behind him; the helmet strong with the serpent's sharp teeth filled
He grasped, and his spear resistless, wherewith, as a ploughman wight
Pricketh his oxen with goad Pelasgian, so did he smite
The flanks of the monsters, and starkly and steadily still did he hold
Unswerving the plough-heft cunningly fashioned of adamant mould.
But the bulls were raging the while with fury exceeding sore
Outbreaking the ravening splendour of fire: as that mad roar
Of the buffeting winds was the blast of their breath, when the seafarers quail
At their yelling above all else, and furl the straining sail.

Yet it was not long ere the beasts, as the stern spear bade them to toil,
Moved on, and behind them was broken the fallow's rugged soil
Cloven apart by the might of the bulls and the ploughman strong.
And terribly crashed and groaned, the ploughshare's furrows along,
The clods uprent, of a man's load each, and with sturdy stride
Trampling the path the hero followed, and aye flung wide
The teeth of the serpent over the clods upheaved by the share,
Ever heedfully turning his head, lest haply, or e'er he was ware,
The harvest fell of the Earth-born against him should rise: and with strain
Of brazen hoofs on laboured the while that fearsome twain.
And it was so, that when the third part now was left of the day,
From the dawn as it waned, when the toil-forwearied labourers pray
'O come to us, sweet unyoking-tide! O tarry thou not!'
Even then by the stalwart ploughman the fallowfield's earing was wrought,
For all it was ploughgates four; and the bulls from the yoke loosed he,
And with shouting and smiting he scared them over the plain to flee.
Then back toward Argo he hied him again, while yet all clear
Of the Earth-born brood the furrows he saw; and with cheer on cheer
His comrades hailed him and heartened. He plunged the brazen gleam
Of his helm mid the river's waters, and slaked his thirst from the stream.
Then bent he his knees till supple they grew; and he filled with might
His great heart, battle-aflame as a boar, when he whetteth for fight
Against the hunters his tushes, and drippeth the plenteous froth

Down from his jaws to the ground, as he churneth their foam in his wrath.
Now by this was the harvest of Earth-born men over all that field
Upspringing; and all round bristled with thronging shield on shield
And with battle-spears twy-pointed, and morions glorious-gleaming
The garth of the death-dealing War-god: the splendour thereof upstreaming
Through the welkin lightened, and up to the heaven of heavens did it go.
And as when on the face of the earth hath fallen abundant snow,
And the wind-blasts chase the wintry clouds in scattered rout
Under the mirk of the night, and all the hosts shine out
Of the stars through the darkness glittering; so those Earth-born men
Flashed, o'er the face of the ground upgrowing: but Jason then
Remembered the rede that Medea the cunning-hearted spake;
And a huge round boulder up from the earth in his grasp did he take—
A terrible quoit for Ares the War-god: there should not be found
Four stalwart men of strength to upraise it a span from the ground.
This caught he up in his hand, and afar with a leap did he throw
Into their midst, and behind his buckler himself crouched low
Awelessly. Loudly the Kolchians shouted—it rang as the roar
Of the shouting sea when his surges over the sharp reefs pour.
But speechless amazement seized on Aietes at that vast sweep
Of the massy crag: and the Earth-born as fleetfoot hounds 'gan leap
Each on his fellow, and yelling they slew: the embattled lines
On their mother the earth, by their own spears slain, were falling, as pines

Or as oaks which the down-rushing blasts of the tempest have scourged and riven.
And even as leapeth a fiery star from the depths of the heaven,
Trailing behind him a splendour, a marvel to men which mark
How he darteth in shattering glories athwart the firmament's dark,
Even so seemed Aison's son on the Earth-born rushing: he bare
His sword from the scabbard outflashed; and here he smote them and there,
Mowing them down: full many on belly or flank did he smite
Which had won to the air waist-high, and some which had risen to light
But shoulder-high, and some as they stood but now upright,
And other some, even as their feet 'gan strain in the onset of fight.
And like as, when round the marches the war upstarteth from sleep,
A husbandman, fearing lest foemen the toil of his hands may reap,
Graspeth a curvèd sickle newly-whetted in hand,
And moweth in haste the crop yet green, neither letteth it stand
Until it be parched in the season due by the shafts of the sun;
Even so of the Earth-born the harvest he reaped; and with blood did they run,
Those furrows, as hurrying runnels that brim from a fountain's plashing.
Fast fell they, some on their faces, bowing their knees, and gnashing
Their teeth on the rough clods—this one stayed on his palm, and he
On his side: as they wallowed they seemed as the monster-brood of the sea.
And many, or ever their feet from beneath the earth had come,
Pierced through, from the height whereunto they had risen, even therefrom
Down-drooping, were resting their death-dewed brows on the earth again.
Even so, I ween, when Zeus down-poureth the measureless rain,

Droop orchard-shoots new-planted, till low on the earth they lie,
Snapped hard by the roots, that the gardener's toil is doubled thereby,
And there come on the heart of the lord of the vineyard, which planted the same,
Confusion of face and deadly anguish: in such wise came
On Aietes the king vexation of spirit and heaviness.
And back to the city he wended amidst of the Kolchian press,
Dark-plotting to bring the heroes' purpose with speed to nought.
And the daylight died, and Jason's mighty achievement was wrought.

THE
DIVINE
POEM OF
MUSÆUS.

Firſt of all Bookes.

TRANSLATED
According to the Ori-
ginall.

By Geo: Chapman.

LONDON
¶ Printed by *Iſaac*
Iaggard. 1616.

THE DIVINE POEM OF MUSÆUS

TO THE COMMUNE READER

When you see *Leander* and *Hero,* the subjects of this Pamphlet, I persuade myself your prejudice will increase to the contempt of it; either headlong presupposing it all one, or at no part matchable, with that partly excellent Poem of Maister Marloe's.[1] For your all one, the Works are in nothing alike; a different character being held through both the style, matter, and invention. For the match of it, let but your eyes be matches, and it will in many parts overmatch it. In the Original, it being by all most learned the incomparable Love-Poem of the world. And I would be something sorry you could justly tax me with doing it any wrong in our English; though perhaps it will not so amble under your seisures and censures, as the before published.

Let the great comprehenders and unable utterers of the Greek elocution in other language drop under their unloadings, how humbly soever they please, and the rather disclaim their own strength, that my weakness may seem the more presumptuous; it can impose no scruple the more burthen on my shoulders, that I will feel; unless *Reason* chance to join arbiter with *Will,* and appear to me; to whom I am ever prostrately subject. And if envious Misconstruction could once leave tryannizing over my infortunate Innocence, both the Charity it argued would render them that use it the more Christian, and me industrious, to hale out of them the discharge of their own duties.

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[1] Christopher Marlowe, a dramatist preceding Shakespeare, wrote a half-finished translation, or rather, paraphrase, of Musæus's poem, which Chapman had completed in still freer fashion. Chapman makes amends for the liberty he had then taken with the original, by now presenting a true translation.

OF MUSÆUS

OUT OF THE WORTHY D. GAGER'S COLLECTIONS.

MUSÆUS was a renowned Greek Poet, born at Athens, the son of Eumolpus. He lived in the time of Orpheus,[1] and is said to be one of them that went the Famous Voyage to Colchos for the Golden Fleece. He wrote of the Gods' Genealogy before any other; and invented the Sphere. Whose opinion was, that all things were made of one Matter, and resolved into one again. Of whose works only this one Poem of *Hero* and *Leander* is extant. Of himself, in his Sixth Book of Æne. Virgil makes memorable mention, where in Elysium he makes Sibylla speak this of him—

> Musæum ante omnes; medium nam plurima turba
> Hunc habet, atque humeris extantem suspicit altis.[2]

He was born in Falerum, a town in the middle of Tuscia, or the famous country of Tuscany in Italy, called also Hetruria.[3]

OF ABYDUS AND SESTUS

ABYDUS and Sestus were two ancient Towns; one in Europe; another in Asia; East and West, opposite; on both the shores of the Hellespont. Their names are extant in Maps to this day. But in their places are two Castles built, which the Turks call Bogazossas, that is, Castles situate by the sea-side. Seamen now call the place where Sestus stood *Malido*. It was likewise called *Possidonium*. But Abydus is called *Auco*. They are both renowned in all writers for nothing so much as the Love of Leander and Hero.

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[1] Chapman mistakes the author, who lived in the sixth century A. D., for the mythical Musæus, for an account of whom see the article in Volume I on Greek Poetry before Homer, page 9.

[2] Chiefly Musæus; in the midst he stood
With ample shoulders towering o'er the rest.
—*Translated by* E. FAIRFAX TAYLOR.

[3] All this, of course, is without a shred of Greek authority.

OF THE HELLESPONT

Hellespont, the straits of the two seas, Propontis and Egeum, running betwixt Abydus and Sestus. Over which Xerxes built a bridge, and joined these two towns together, conveying over his army of seven hundred thousand men. It is now called by some *The Straits of Gallipolis;* but by Frenchmen, Flemings, and others, *The Arm of Saint George.* It had his name Hellespont, because *Helle* the daughter of *Athamas K. of Thebes* was drowned in it. And therefore of one it is called *The Virgin-killing Sea;* of another *The Virgin-Sea.* It is but seven *Italian* furlongs broad, which is one of our miles lacking a furlong.

HERO AND LEANDER

Goddess, relate the witness-bearing light
Of Loves, that would not bear a human sight;
The Sea-man that transported marriages,
Shipt in the night, his bosom plowing th' seas;
The love-joys that in gloomy clouds did fly
The clear beams of th' immortal Morning's eye;
Abydus and fair Sestus, where I hear
The night-hid Nuptials of young Hero were;
Leander's swimming to her; and a Light,
A Light that was administress of sight
To cloudy Venus, and did serve t' address
Night-wedding Hero's nuptial offices;
A Light that took the very form of Love;
Which had been justice in ethereal Jove,
When the nocturnal duty had been done,
T' advance amongst the consort of the Sun,
And call the Star that Nuptial Loves did guide,
And to the Bridegroom gave and grac'd the Bride,
Because it was companion to the death
Of Loves, whose kind cares cost their dearest breath;
And that fame-freighted ship from shipwrack kept
That such sweet nuptials brought they never slept,

Till air was with a bitter flood inflate,
That bore their firm loves as infixt a hate.
But, Goddess, forth, and both one issue sing,
The Light extinct, Leander perishing.
Two towns there were, that with one sea were wall'd,
Built near, and opposite; this Sestus call'd,
Abydus that; the Love his bow bent high,
And at both Cities let one arrow fly,
That two (a Virgin and a Youth) inflam'd:
The youth was sweetly-grac'd Leander nam'd,
The virgin Hero; Sestus she renowns,
Abydus he, in birth; of both which towns
Both were the beauty-circled stars; and both
Grac'd with like looks, as with one love and troth.
If that way lie thy course, seek for my sake
A Tower, that Sestian Hero once did make
Her watch-tower, and a torch stood holding there,
By which Leander his sea-course did steer.
Seek, likewise, of Abydus ancient tow'rs,
The roaring sea lamenting to these hours
Leander's Love and Death. But say, how came
He (at Abydus born) to feel the flame
Of Hero's love at Sestus, and to bind
In chains of equal fire bright Hero's mind?
The graceful Hero, born of gentle blood,
Was Venus' priest; and since she understood
No nuptial language, from her parents she
Dwelt in a tow'r that over-look'd the sea.
For shamefastness and chastity, she reign'd
Another Goddess; nor was ever train'd
In women's companies; nor learn'd to tread
A graceful dance, to which such years are bred.
The envious spites of women she did fly,
(Women for beauty their own sex envy)
All her devotion was to Venus done,
And to his heavenly Mother her great Son
Would reconcile with sacrifices ever,
And ever trembled at his flaming quiver.

Yet scap'd not so his fiery shafts her breast;
For now the popular Venerean Feast,
Which to Adonis, and great Cypria's State,
The Sestians yearly us'd to celebrate,
Was come; and to that holy day came all
That in the bordering isles the sea did wall.
To it in flocks they flew; from Cyprus these,
Environ'd with the rough Carpathian seas;
These from Hæmonia; nor remain'd a man
Of all the towns in th' isles Cytherean;
Not one was left, that us'd to dance upon
The tops of odoriferous Libanon;
Not one of Phrygia, not one of all
The neighbours seated near the Festival;
Nor one of opposite Abydus' shore;
None of all these, that virgins' favours wore,
Were absent; all such fill the flowing way,
When Fame proclaims a solemn holy day,
Not bent so much to offer holy flames,
As to the beauties of assembled dames.
The virgin Hero enter'd th' holy place,
And graceful beams cast round about her face,
Like to the bright orb of the rising Moon.
The top-spheres of her snowy cheeks puts on
A glowing redness, like the two-hued rose
Her odorous bud beginning to disclose.
You would have said, in all her lineaments
A meadow full of roses she presents.
All over her she blush'd; which (putting on
Her white robe, reaching to her ankles) shone
(While she in passing did her feet dispose)
As she had wholly been a moving rose.
Graces in numbers from her parts did flow.
The Ancients therefore (since they did not know
Hero's unbounded beauties) falsely feign'd
Only three Graces; for, when Hero strain'd
Into a smile her priestly modesty,
A hundred Graces grew from either eye.

A fit one, sure, the Cyprian Goddess found
To be her ministress; and so highly crown'd
With worth her grace was, past all other dames,
That, of a priest made to the Queen of Flames,
A new Queen of them she in all eyes shin'd;
And did so undermine each tender mind
Of all the young men; and there was not one
But wish'd fair Hero was his wife, or none.
Nor could she stir about the well-built Fane,
This way or that, but every way she wan
A following mind in all men; which their eyes,
Lighted with all their inmost faculties,
Clearly confirmed; and one (admiring) said,
"All Sparta I have travell'd, and survey'd
The City Lacedæmon, where we hear
All Beauties' labors and contentions were,
A woman, yet, so wise and delicate
I never saw. It may be Venus gat
One of the younger Graces to supply
The place of priest-hood to her Deity.
Ev'n tir'd I am with sight, yet doth not find
A satisfaction by my sight my mind.
O could I once ascend sweet Hero's bed,
Let me be straight found in her bosom dead!
I would not wish to be in heaven a God,
Were Hero here my wife. But, if forbod
To lay profane hands on thy holy priest,
O Venus, with another such assist
My nuptial longings." Thus pray'd all that spake;
The rest their wounds hid, and in frenzies brake;
Her beauty's fire, being so suppress'd, so rag'd.
But thou, Leander, more than all engag'd,
Wouldst not, when thou hadst view'd th' amazing Maid,
Waste with close stings, and seek no open aid,
But, with the flaming arrows of her eyes
Wounded unwares, thou wouldst in sacrifice
Vent th' inflammation thy burnt blood did prove,
Or live with sacred med'cine of her love.

But now the love-brand in his eye-beams burn'd,
And with unconquered fire his heart was turn'd
Into a coal; together wrought the flame.
The virtuous beauty of a spotless dame
Sharper to men is than the swiftest shaft;
His eye the way by which his heart is caught,
And, from the stroke his eye sustains, the wound
Opens within, and doth his entrails sound.
Amaze then took him, Impudence and Shame
Made earthquakes in him with their frost and flame.
His heart betwixt them toss'd, till Reverence
Took all these prisoners in him; and from thence
Her matchless beauty, with astonishment,
Increas'd his bands; till aguish Love, that lent
Shame and Observance, licens'd their remove;
And, wisely liking impudence in love,
Silent he went, and stood against the Maid,
And in side glances faintly he convey'd
His crafty eyes about her; with dumb shows
Tempting her mind to error. And now grows
She to conceive his subtle flame, and joy'd
Since he was graceful. Then herself employ'd
Her womanish cunning, turning from him quite
Her lovely count'nance; giving yet some light,
Even by her dark signs, of her kindling fire,
With up and down-looks whetting his desire.
He joy'd at heart to see Love's sense in her,
And no contempt of what he did prefer.
And while he wish'd unseen to urge the rest,
The day shrunk down her beams to lowest West,
And East; the Even-Star took vantage of her shade.
Then boldly he his kind approaches made,
And as he saw the russet clouds increase,
He strain'd her rosy hand, and held his peace,
But sigh'd as silence had his bosom broke.
When she, as silent, put on anger's cloke,
And drew her hand back. He, discerning well
Her would and would not, to her boldlier fell;

And her elaborate robe, with much cost wrought,
About her waist embracing, on he brought
His love to th' in-parts of the reverend Fane;
She (as her love-sparks more and more did wane)
Went slowly on, and, with a woman's words
Threat'ning Leander, thus his boldness bords:
"Why Stranger, are you mad? Ill-fated man,
Why hale you thus a virgin Sestian?
Keep on your way. Let go, fear to offend
The noblesse of my birth-right's either friend.[1]
It ill becomes you to solicit thus
The priest of Venus. Hopeless, dangerous,
The barr'd up way is to a virgin's bed."
Thus, for the maiden form, she menaced.
But he well-knew, that when these female mines
Break out in fury, they are certain signs
Of their persuasions. Women's threats once shown,
Shows in it only all you wish your own.
And therefore of the rubi-colour'd maid
The odorous neck he with a kiss assay'd,
And, stricken with the sting of love, he pray'd:
"Dear Venus, next to Venus you must go;
And next Minerva, trace Minerva too;
Your like with earthy dames no light can show;
To Jove's Great Daughters I must liken you.
Blest was thy great begetter; blest was she
Whose womb did bear thee; but most blessedly
The womb itself fare that thy throes did prove.
O! hear my prayer! Pity the need of Love.
As priest of Venus, practise Venus' rites.
Come, and instruct me in her bed's-delights.
It fits not you, a virgin, to vow aids
To Venus' service; Venus loves no maids.
If Venus' institutions you prefer,
And faithful ceremonies vow to her,
Nuptials and beds they be. If her love binds,
Love Love's sweet laws, that soften human minds.

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[1] *i.e.,* both my parents.

Make me your servant; husband, if you pleas'd;
Whom Cupid with his burning shafts has seiz'd,
And hunted to you, as swift Hermes drave
With his gold-rod Jove's bold son to be slave
To Lydia's sov'reign Virgin; but for me,
Venus insulting forc'd my feet to thee,
I was not guided by wise Mercury.
Virgin, you know, when Atalanta fled,
Out of Arcadia, kind Melanion's bed,
Affecting virgin-life, your angry Queen,
Whom first she us'd with a malignant spleen,
At last possest him of her complete heart.
And you, dear love, because I would avert
Your Goddess' anger, I would fain persuade."
With these love-luring words conform'd he made
The maid recusant to his blood's desire,
And set her soft mind on an erring fire.
Dumb she was strook; and down to earth she threw
Her rosy eyes, hid in vermilion hue,
Made red with shame. Oft with her foot she rac'd
Earth's upper part; and oft (as quite ungrac'd)
About her shoulders gather'd up her weed.
All these fore-tokens are that men should speed.
Of a persuaded virgin, to her bed
Promise is most given when the least is said.
And now she took in Love's sweet-bitter sting,
Burn'd in a fire that cool'd her surfeiting.
Her beauties likewise strook her friend amaz'd;
For, while her eyes fixt on the pavement gaz'd,
Love on Leander's looks shew'd fury seiz'd.
Never enough his greedy eyes were pleas'd
To view the fair gloss of her tender neck.
At last this voice past, and out did break
A ruddy moisture from her bashful eyes:
"Stranger, perhaps thy words might exercise
Motion in flints, as well as my soft breast.
Who taught thee words, that err from East to West
In their wild liberty? O woe is me!
To this my native soil who guided thee?

All thou hast said is vain; for how canst thou
(Not to be trusted; one I do not know)
Hope to excite in me a mixed love?
Tis clear, that Law by no means will approve
Nuptials with us; for thou canst never gain
My parents' graces. If thou wouldst remain
Close on my shore, as outcast from thine own,
Venus will be in darkest corners known.
Man's tongue is loose to scandal; loose acts done
In surest secret, in the open sun
And every market place will burn thine ears.
But say, What name sustainst thou? What soil bears
Name of thy country? Mine I cannot hide.
My far-spread name is Hero; I abide
Hous'd in an all-seen tow'r, whose tops touch heaven,
Built on a steep shore, that to sea is driven
Before the City Sestus; one sole maid
Attending. And this irksome life is laid
By my austere friends' wills on one so young;
No like-year'd virgins near, no youthful throng,
To meet in some delights, dances, or so;
But day and night the windy sea doth throw
Wild murmuring cuffs about our deaf'ned ears."
This said, her white robe hid her cheeks like spheres.
And then (with shame affected, since she us'd
Words that desir'd youths, and her friends accus'd)
She blam'd herself for them, and them for her.
Mean space Leander felt Love's arrow err
Thro' all his thoughts; devising how he might
Encounter Love, that dar'd him so to fight.
Mind-changing Love wounds men and cures again.
Those mortals over whom he lists to reign,
Th' All-tamer stoops to, in advising how
They may with some ease bear the yoke, his bow.
So our Leander, whom he hurt, he heal'd.
Who having long his hidden fire conceal'd,
And vex'd with thoughts he thirsted to impart,
His stay he quitted with this quickest art:

"Virgin, for thy love I will swim a wave
That ships denies; and though with fire it rave,
In way to thy bed, all the seas in one
I would despise; the Hellespont were none.
All nights to swim to one sweet bed with thee
Were nothing, if when Love had landed me,
All hid in weeds and in Venerean foam,
I brought withal bright Hero's husband home.
Not far from hence, and just against thy town,
Abydus stands, that my birth calls mine own.
Hold but a torch then in thy heaven-high tow'r,
(Which I beholding, to that starry pow'r
May plow the dark seas, as the Ship of Love)
I will not care to see Bootes move
Down to the sea, nor sharp Orion trail
His never-wet car, but arrive my sail,
Against my country, at thy pleasing shore.
But (dear) take heed that no ungentle blore
The torch extinguish, bearing all the light
By which my life sails, lest I lose thee quite.
Wouldst thou my name know (as thou dost my house)
It is Leander, lovely Hero's spouse."
Thus this kind couple their close marriage made,
And friendship ever to be held in shade
(Only by witness of one nuptial light)
Both vow'd; agreed that Hero every night
Should hold her torch out; every night her love
The tedious passage of the sea should prove.
The whole even of the watchful nuptials spent,
Against their wills the stern power of constraint
Enforc'd their parting. Hero to her tow'r;
Leander (minding his returning hour)
Took of the turret marks, for fear he fail'd,
And to well-founded broad Abydus sail'd.
All night both thirsted for the secret strife
Of each young married lovely man and wife;
And all day after no desire shot home,
But that the chamber-decking night were come.

And now Night's sooty clouds clapp'd all sail on,
Fraught all with sleep; yet took Leander none,
But on th' oppos'd shore of the noisefull seas
The messenger of glitt'ring marriages
Look'd wishly for; or rather long'd to see
The witness of their Light to misery,
Far off discover'd in their covert bed.
When Hero saw the blackest curtain spred
That veil'd the dark night, her bright torch she shew'd.
Whose light no sooner th'eager Lover view'd,
But Love his blood set on as bright a fire;
Together burn'd the torch and his desire.
But hearing of the sea the horrid roar,
With which the tender air the mad waves tore,
At first he trembled; but at last he rear'd
High as the storm his spirit, and thus cheer'd
(Using these words to it) his resolute mind:
"Love dreadful is; the Sea with nought inclin'd;
But Sea is water, outward all his ire;
When Love lights his fear with an inward fire.
Take fire, my heart, fear nought that flits and raves,
Be Love himself to me, despise these waves.
Art thou to know that Venus' birth was here?
Commands the sea, and all that grieves us there?"
This said, his fair limbs of his weed he stript;
Which, at his head with both hands bound, he shipt,
Leapt from the shore, and cast into the sea
His lovely body; thrusting all his way
Up to the torch, that still he thought did call;
He oars, he steerer, he the ship and all.
Hero advanc'd upon a tow'r so high,
As soon would lose on it the fixedst eye;
And, like her Goddess Star, with her light shining,
The winds, that always (as at her repining)
Would blast her pleasures, with her veil she checkt,
And from their envies did her torch protect.
And this she never left, till she had brought
Leander to the havenful shore he sought.

When down she ran, and up she lighted then,
To her tow'r's top, the weariest of men.
First at the gates (without a syllable us'd)
She hugg'd her panting husband, all diffus'd
With foamy drops still stilling from his hair.
Then brought she him into the inmost fair
Of all, her virgin-chamber, that (at best)
Was with her beauties ten times better drest.
His body then she cleans'd; his body oil'd
With rosy odours, and his bosom (soil'd
With the unsavoury sea) she render'd sweet
Then, in the high-made bed (ev'n panting yet)
Herself she pour'd about her husband's breast,
And these words utter'd: "With too much unrest,
O husband, you have bought this little peace!
Husband! No other man hath paid th' increase
Of that huge sum of pains you took for me.
And yet I know, it is enough for thee
To suffer for my love the fishy savours
The working sea breathes. Come lay all thy labors
On my all-thankful bosom." All this said,
He straight ungirdled her; and both parts paid
To Venus what her gentle statutes bound.
Here weddings were, but not a musical sound;
Here bed-rites offer'd, but no hymns of praise,
Nor poet sacred wedlock's worth did raise.
No torches gilt the honor'd nuptial bed,
Nor any youths much-moving dances led.
No father, nor no reverend mother, sung
Hymen, O Hymen, blessing loves so young.
But when the consummating hours had crown'd
The down-right nuptials, a calm bed was found;
Silence the room fixt; Darkness deckt the bride;
But hymns and such rites far were laid aside.
Night was sole gracer of this nuptial house;
Cheerful Aurora never saw the spouse
In any beds that were too broadly known,
Away he fled still to his region,
And breath'd insatiate of the absent Sun.

Hero kept all this from her parents still,
Her priestly weed was large, and would not fill,
A maid by day she was, a wife by night;
Which both so lov'd they wish'd it never light.
And thus both, hiding the strong need of love,
In Venus' secret sphere rejoic'd to move.
But soon their joy died; and that still-toss'd state
Of their stol'n nuptials drew but little date.
For when the frosty Winter kept his justs,
Rousing together all the horrid gusts
That from the ever-whirling pits arise,
And those weak deeps that drive up to the skies,
Against the drench'd foundations making knock
Their curled foreheads; then with many a shock
The winds and seas met, made the storms aloud
Beat all the rough sea with a pitchy cloud.
And then the black bark, buffeted with gales,
Earth checks so rudely that in two it falls;
The seaman flying winter's faithless sea.
Yet, brave Leander, all this bent at thee
Could not compel in thee one fit of fear;
But when the cruel faithless messenger
(The tow'r) appeared and shew'd th' accustom'd light,
It stung thee on, secure of all the spite
The raging sea spit. But since Winter came,
Unhappy Hero should have cool'd her flame,
And lie without Leander, no more lighting
Her short-liv'd bed-star; but strange Fate exciting
As well as Love, and both their pow'rs combin'd
Enticing her, in her hand never shin'd
The fatal Love-torch, but this one hour, more.
Night came. And now the Sea against the shore
Muster'd her winds up; from whose wint'ry jaws
They belch'd their rude breaths out in bitt'rest flaws.
In midst of which Leander, with the pride
Of his dear hope to bord his matchless bride,
Up on the rough back of the high sea leaps;
And then waves thrust up waves; the watry heaps

Tumbled together; sea and sky were mixt;
The fighting Winds the frame of Earth unfixt;
Zephyr and Eurus flew in either's face,
Notus and Boreas wrastler-like embrace,
And toss each other with their bristled backs.
Inevitable were the horrid cracks
The shaken Sea gave; ruthful were the wracks
Leander suffer'd in the savage gale
Th' inexorable whirlpits did exhale.
Often he pray'd to Venus born of seas,
Neptune their King; and Boreas, that 'twould please
His Godhead, for the Nymph Atthea's sake,
Not to forget the like stealth he did make
For her dear love, touch't then with his sad state.
But none would help him; Love compels not Fate.
Every way toss'd with waves and Air's rude breath
Justling together, he was crush'd to death.
No more his youthful force his feet commands,
Unmov'd lay now his late all-moving hands.
His throat was turn'd free channel to the flood,
And drink went down that did him far from good.
No more the false light for the curst wind burn'd,
That of Leander ever-to-be-mourn'd
Blew out the love and soul. When Hero still
Had watchful eyes, and a most constant will
To guide the voyage; and the morning shin'd,
Yet not by her light she her love could find.
She stood distract with miserable woes,
And round about the sea's broad shoulders throws
Her eye, to second the extinguish'd light;
And tried if any way her husband's sight
Erring in any part she could descry.
When at her turret's foot she saw him lie
Mangl'd with rocks, and all embrued, she tore
About her breast the curious weed she wore;
And with a shriek from off her turret's height
Cast her fair body headlong, that fell right
On her dead husband, spent with him her breath;
And each won other in the worst of death.

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